

SAYINGS OF
PARAMHANSA RAMKRISHNA

TRANSLATED AND EDITED
By
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PARAMHANSA RAMKRISHNA

Born: 1836

Died: 1886

OBEISANCE
To
PARAMHANSA RAMKRISHNA

WHO SAW THE TRUTH IN EVERY RELIGION,

WHO REALISED GOD IN HIS TRANCES OF ECSTASY,

WHO GAVE THE MESSAGE OF UNIVERSAL

RELIGION TO THE WORLD!

INTRODUCTION

The year 1936 witnessed the centenary of the birthday of Paramhansa Ramkrishna. He was born a hundred years ago; he lived to the age of fifty and died in 1886. His hundredth birthday was celebrated not only throughout India, but also in Europe and America. In the fifty years that have passed after his death monasteries called after him have been erected in various parts of India and out of India. A temple, probably the largest in Bengal, is in course of construction at Belur, the headquarters of the Ramkrishna Mission, near Calcutta. Men and women of every creed and every race have been attracted to him in reverence and admiration. His immediate followers, both monks and laymen, worship him as an incarnation of God. The Order of the Ramkrishna Mission is constantly getting fresh recruits. The brethren, or Swamis as they are called according

to the ancient Order of Indian monks, observe strict celibacy and perfect discipline of life and conduct.

To the Ramkrishna centenary number of the periodicals issued by the Ramkrishna Society contributions were sent by distinguished scholars and thinkers from every part of the world. A commemoration volume is being printed. A considerable literature has already come into existence in connection with Ramkrishna and his foremost disciple, Vivekananda. Their lives have not only been written by members of the Order and disciples but by a European literary man of the eminence of M. Romain Roland. Contributions of money are coming in from every part of the world for the maintenance and expansion of the Ramkrishna Mission and Society.

Does the world yet understand the significance and the object of Ramkrishna coming into the world at a time when the force of religion was relaxing everywhere? A justification of the per-

idical incarnation of divinity is given in a famous verse of the Bhagavadgita, but this can be acceptable to only those who believe in the doctrine of divine incarnation. Even in India there was no such doctrine in the Vedic age, which includes the Upanishads and the Vedanta. The first conception of divine incarnation belongs to the Puranic period, and the incarnations were of Vishnu, who is not God, the Brahman of the Upanishads. It is only in the Bhagavadgita that Sri Krishna announces himself as God incarnate. But even in India among the Hindus Sri Krishna is not worshipped by all sects. The Saivas worship Siva and not Sri Krishna. At Benares there is no Sri Krishna temple just as there is no Siva temple at Muttra—Brindavan. Profound as is the doctrine of the Bhagavadgita there is not the remotest likelihood of its being accepted universally.

There is no doctrine of divine incarnation in Zoroastrianism. It would be blasphemous to

assert that Ahura Mazda or even any of the Amshaspands can appear in the form of man. In Christianity many complications have arisen on account of Jesus being called the Son of God, conceived by Mary of the Holy Ghost. A miracle is always slippery ground. In India Jesus would have been simply called an avatar. But there will be no second Christ in Christianity. The doctrine of Islam is clear and uncompromising. The Holy Prophet—on whom be peace! has emphatically declared in the Quran and the Kalma that there is no god but God. Not only is any incarnation of the deity sacrilegious and impossible, but a pictorial representation of even the Prophet is absolutely forbidden. It may be noted, in passing, that although there is no mention of God in the teaching of the Buddha, images of Buddha himself are installed in Buddhist pagodas. Christian churches contain images of Jesus Christ and Mary, but no image of any kind can be introduced into a mosque. The Messiah of the Jews is yet to come,

but they do not believe in the doctrine of divine incarnation and there are no images in Synagogues.

Instead of applying the maxim of the Bhagavadgita about the fall of religion and the appearance of God in the flesh to protect holy men and punish the wicked and to re-establish religion it is more acceptable, from the point of view of humanity in general, to assert that the entire human race dwells on an inclined plane which slopes down to an abyss and not on the high tableland of holiness, and there is a constant tendency to slip downward. From time to time a Teacher appears and helps in raising humanity, or a section of it, to a higher level. As there are many races of men so there are many religions, but even as all humanity is essentially one so the essence of religion is one. Religion is the nobler and finer urge in the instinct of man. It would not be right to say that the standard of faith varies according to the standard of civilisation, for

civilisation is usually more materialistic than spiritualistic.

At the time of Sri Ramkrishna's appearance India was under the spell of the materialism of the West. The intelligent section of the community was dazzled by the glamour of European civilisation. The only culture to which any heed was given was European culture. People who did not know English were considered of no account. Indian orators spoke in English; Indian writers wrote in English. The Brahmo Samaj represented the movement of religious and social reform, but its adherents were few and it was already divided into three sections. The Brahmo Samaj was not a new religion; it had adopted the Upanishads as its scripture and worshipped the Brahman—One without a second—as the God of the universe. The prayers and the rituals were either taken from the Upanishads, or adopted from them. Idolatry in every form was rejected. There was a marked pre-

ference for dialectics, not always free from acerbity of feeling. In the three sections of the Brahmo Samaj itself feeling sometimes ran regrettably high.

Who could have then foreseen that even then, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a great purpose was shaping itself and the words of a new gospel were being heard in the Temple at Dakshineswar on the banks of the Hugly, a few miles from Calcutta? A Power, of which the ways are always inscrutable, had ordained that the passing glamour of Western materialism should be superseded by the eternal effulgence of universal spiritualism; that the pride of learning, superficial or deep, should be humbled to the dust.

Who was this new Teacher? He was born in 1836 and his parents had named him Gadadhar Chatterji. He was born in a poor Brahman family in an obscure village in Bengal. He could barely read and write in Bengali and he had shown a marked aversion for literary education even as a

boy. He knew no Sanskrit; he knew no English. He had been a priest in the temple at Dakshineswar, but he developed such strange fancies that he had to be relieved of his duties. The owners of the temple, however, recognised his marked spiritual powers, gave him a room in the temple to live in and provided him with the necessities of life.

In ordinary circumstances, without any culture to widen his views this man should have been an ignorant, narrow-minded, shallow, superstitious, idol-worshipping, nameless creature, and yet he came of the race of which the Buddha spoke, 'of descent invisible,' of the lineage which has produced the Lights of the World.

Of the discipline and intense devotion that he practised in the grounds and the small wood of the Temple, of the itinerant Sadhus with whom he came in contact, this is not the place to write at any length. The name Ramkrishna was given to him by a Punjabi Vedantist called Totapuri. He showed

astonishing aptitude in acquiring every kind of spiritual knowledge, but all the power and radiance of him was his own. For some time he lived in a state of religious frenzy. So absorbing was his meditation and so intense his realisation that he passed into ecstatic trances of direct communion, well known as *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* in the technical language of devotion. This gave him the distinctive designation of Paramhansa, the highest order of Yogi.

His restlessness passed but he was filled with a great longing to meet other devout people so that he might communicate to them the truth that had come to him. Ostensibly, he was a worshipper of the goddess Kali, whose priest he had been. But it was not the idol that he worshipped. To him Kali and Brahman were identical, Purush and Prakriti. A worshipper of Kali he took part in Vaishnava *sankirtans*, dances and songs. He had been to a mosque, grew a beard and called upon

the name of Allah for some months. He had been to a church and kept a picture of Jesus Christ in his room. There was also an image of the Buddha. His desire was fulfilled and people began coming in to him—not the ignorant men who gape at sadhus and ask for miracles, but men of education and occasionally of wealth, men belonging to the Brahmo Samaj, young boys at school and college, writers of distinction and men distinguished in public life, religious men from every part of the country, wealthy Marwaris and others.

How did he impress the people who saw him? Not only was he practically ignorant but he did not even know the ways and manners of genteel people. His speech was that of a village yokel, vulgar and uncouth, freely intermixed with swear-words. He was so utterly careless that he could not even keep his *dhoti* round his loins and sometimes sat and moved about stark naked like a child. He was married but had never known his wife.

He had formally worshipped her in due form as Sakti, the mother, the human image of the Mother Kali. That was the light in which he regarded all women. When he spoke all voices were stilled. And even his speech was not free because he stammered, although the stammering was neither bad nor unpleasant. To him listened great orators, writers, learned men of science, religious leaders in bewildered wonder and with growing reverence and veneration, for he spoke as no other man within the memory of the hearers had spoken. They felt that his words were with power, with grace, with healing, with solace. The fullness of his wisdom and spiritual store was incredible, and there was an incessant outpouring of simile and parable and illustration, all of the simplest but all sublimated by his own profound realisation. To him the most complicated problems of the various phases of the religion of the Aryans were as simple as the first letters of the alphabet. He had read nothing, but the truths of the Vedas and the

Vedanta, the Upanishads, the doctrines of the Tantras, the Gita and the Bhagavat were perfectly familiar to him and he expounded them with such luminous clearness as to be intelligible to a child. With all this fullness of spiritual wealth he worshipped, as orthodox Hindus might well say, at the altars of strange gods. He not only spoke marvellously but he sang and danced in an inspired manner. He was the living embodiment of rapturous joy.

Not only he never received money but he could not even hold silver or gold coin in his hand. If a rupee were placed on his palm the fingers would automatically and without any volition on the part of Ramkrishna twist and contort and the rupee would fall down. So also did his garment slip down from his waist as the veil of Maya slipped down from the vision of his spirit. He never assumed the orange coloured garb of monkhood but was dressed like an ordinary

Bengali and invariably wore a *dhoti* with a red border. The exterior did not betray the light within.

Through him was accomplished the great and inscrutable purpose of which I have spoken.

People had heard and read of *Samadhi* but no one had seen it as it manifested itself in Param-hansa Ramkrishna. He used to pass into Samadhi without any warning. A thought, a word, a song would send him off into one of these trances of ecstatic rapture. The mere sight of a lion in the Calcutta Zoological Gardens reminded him that it was the steed of the goddess Durga and threw him into Samadhi. It proved that he was in constant communion with God and he spoke of nothing but God. He spoke of God conditioned and unconditioned, Nirguna (without qualities) and Saguna (with qualities), Formless and with Form, quiescent as Purusha and actively creative as Prakriti. God was not only everpresent to him

but plainly visible. So simple and so absolute was his faith that no one who saw him could ever dream of questioning it.

His contact with the Brahmo Samaj deserves prominent mention. His intimacy with Keshub Chunder Sen, the great orator and the leader of the Brahmo Samaj of India, was known to every one. Both visited each other often and Ramkrishna went and saw Keshub shortly before his death. Keshub treated Ramkrishna with such reverence that he used to take the dust of his feet. Several leading members of his church used to go to Paramhansa often. Narendranath Dutt, afterwards known as Swami Vivekananda, used to frequent the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj when he first saw Ramkrishna. Afterwards he left the Brahmo Samaj and became a follower of the Paramhansa. Pandit Sivanath Sastri and Bijoy Krishna Goswami, leaders of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, were constant visitors. Bijoy Krishna

afterwards left the Samaj and became a Hindu Sannyasi. On one occasion he caught Ramkrishna's feet to his breast and said by implication that Ramkrishna was an incarnation of God. Ramkrishna went to see Maharishi Devendranath Tagore, the head of the Adi Brahmo Samaj, and Devendranath asked him to come to the anniversary celebration. He suggested that Ramkrishna should come properly dressed, but the latter replied he could not become a Babu (a gentleman). Afterwards Devendranath sent a letter saying that Ramkrishna should not be brought to the anniversary meeting. Devendranath was a deeply religious man but he also belonged to the gentry and aristocracy of Calcutta. These would be largely represented at the meeting and even a Paramhansa, if not a *sufedposh* (dressed in white garb), would be out of place in such an assembly. Would Jesus Christ be allowed a seat in the House of Lords?

Swami Vivekananda publicly said he owed everything to his Guru, Ramkrishna. His principal debt was the quality of fearless outspokenness. Ramkrishna addressed every man by his name and men who thought a great deal of themselves were frequently rebuked by him. By spirit, intuition and self-discipline he was very humble, but ill-timed levity or presumptuousness of any kind received no toleration from him. When a man who bore the title of Raja went to see him he said he could not address him as a Raja as that would be untrue. A Raja means a ruling King and a titular Raja in India is no more a king than the labourer in the field. Mere learning, or the culture of which we think so much, wealth, social position, fame meant nothing to him. The only man who appealed to him was one who had a religious mind and thought about God. When a famous public man told him that he (the visitor) was engaged in helping others Ramkrishna flatly told him that he had no power to do so unless authorised by God.

At that time there were many orators in Calcutta and Keshub Chunder Sen was the greatest of them. Ramkrishna said what was the use of giving lectures unless the speaker had a mandate from God? People would listen to lectures and forget them after a short time. Alas, who now remembers even the matchless oratory of Keshub Chunder Sen ?

And here was this man, almost unlettered, in the midst of highly educated men, a man lacking the distinction of a cultured man, whose mode of speech was that of an ignorant villager, who, far from being fluent, stammered in his speech, and who never spoke to an audience of more than a score or two of men. At the end of a cycle of a hundred years, during fifty of which he has not been seen on earth, his words are being quoted and repeated in every part of the world, and there is rejoicing everywhere. The world sees now as it has seen before how much greater is the Teacher than the

Orator, and how much higher is the spirit than the intellect. Ramkrishna himself said that in moods of exaltation men of learning and others appeared to him as of no account. He proved in his own life that before the man of God other men are nothing. Before the light of the spirit all other lights fade and disappear just as the moon and stars disappear when the sun rises.

How can we account for the manner in which he drew a number of young men—very young—around him and taught them to live a pure life and to consecrate their lives to God? How did he discover the greatness that was latent in the boy Narendranath Dutt, who afterwards dazzled the world as the Hindu monk Vivekananda? Whence came this incredibly keen prophetic insight which foresaw in this young boy of no particular promise the making of a world-famed apostle and teacher? I was with Vivekananda at college and no one considered him a bright student.

All that was known of him was that he was a good singer. I left college without a degree before completing the full course of studies, Vivekananda passed out with an ordinary degree, without any distinction. Many years after Vivekananda came and stayed with me as my guest at Lahore while I was the Editor of the *Tribune* newspaper. He had then been crowned with the crown of glory at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago. Ramkrishna had not only predicted Vivekananda's greatness but foretold that the young boy would not live very long if he knew the power that lay in him. As a matter of fact, Vivekananda died at the early age of thirty-nine and he himself told me of his approaching death three years before he passed away. The few disciples that Ramkrishna left all proved to be remarkable men, men of unblemished purity of character and of fine spiritual insight.

The blessing of seeing and hearing Param-hansa has been mine and I am living still to write

about it. I saw him in July, 1881, when I was a lad of nineteen. I saw him in company with Keshub Chunder Sen and a number of persons including some Brahmo missionaries. We were on board a small steamer, or steam yacht belonging to Maharaja Nripendranarayan Bhup of Cuch Behar, Keshub's son-in-law. At Dakshineswar the Paramhansa accompanied by his nephew Hriday came on board. He and Keshub greeted each other by deep bows almost touching the deck with their heads and folded hands. They sat down on the deck facing and close to each other. Keshub beckoned to me to sit by his side. That was my privilege. I saw before me a man of middle age and medium height, dark-skinned, frail looking, with uncombed hair and beard turning grey, and eyes that were half-closed and introspective. The lips were rather thick and the lower lip was loose, permitting the front teeth to be seen. He was wearing a *dhoti* with a red border and a small shirt which was unbuttoned. He had no shoes on his

feet, though he did wear shoes and slippers on other occasions. He peered round him, observed that all had good eyes, and then looked at a young man in European clothing sitting on a capstan. 'Who's that?' inquired Ramkrishna. 'That's a young man just returned from England,' assumingly replied Keshub. 'That's right,' rejoined Ramkrishna, 'one feels afraid of a Saheb, you know.' That set us all laughing and Ramkrishna straightaway plunged into serious conversation.

It was not a conversation at all. From beginning to end, for nearly eight hours, only a single voice was heard, the voice of Ramkrishna. There was the occasional slight stammer, but it was no hindrance to the flow of speech. There was the occasional mixing up of the two forms of 'you,' the lack of elegance. But who had ever heard such speech, the words welling forth from an inexhaustible spring of wisdom and God-consciousness? It was only afterwards that I could realise

how great had been my privilege and what blessing had been mine. Here were two kindred spirits met together, two of the elect on the spiritual plane. Ramkrishna was at his best and highest. There was utter and absolute silence on board. Every neck was craned forward, every ear was strained to hear the precious words that fell from the lips of the Master. Our heart-strings were taut with intentness. The wealth of metaphor and parable that poured forth, the profundity of the thoughts, the palpably vivid realisation of God held us breathless with feeling and emotion.

Underneath the keel of the boat rippled the waters of the river Hugly, called the sacred Ganges by the people, the banks on both sides with their lines of trees and buildings slid past, but of all this I had no knowledge and was looking only at the ascetic, intent face before me and listened only to the flow of words, passing from one idea to another and making the conception of God a living and

throbbing reality. As he was speaking Ramkrishna kept moving forward on his haunches a little from time to time, until his bent legs up to part of the thighs rested on Keshub's lap. Keshub sat perfectly still, without the slightest attempt to move back or withdraw from the close contact. Not for a moment did he withdraw his eyes from the face of Ramkrishna, whose *dhori* had slipped down from his waist and lay round him in a heap. Suddenly he recollected himself, drew back and arranged his cloth. Keshub then asked him, 'Will you not tell us something of the Nirakara (the Formless Brahman)?'

Immediately the half-open eyes opened for a moment, there was a new gleam in them, and the Paramhansa said, 'You ask me about the Nirakara? That is a very difficult thing. Nirakara, Nirakara' and without another word he passed into Samadhi.

What was it like? I had only heard the word; I was young, not yet out of my teens. I as

well as every one present intently watched the face of Ramkrishna as it underwent an extraordinary and marvellous change. That voice to which we had been listening so long with breathless attention, gentle, intense, compelling, ceased abruptly. The sitting figure became rigid, without, however, any suggestion of rigour or stiffness. The pose remained easy, with the legs crossed. Both hands rested on the lap, the fingers lightly interlocked. It was the face however, that denoted the change that had come over the spirit of Ramkrishna. The eyes remained half-closed, but they were wholly closed to the outside world. They conveyed no image or impression of external objects to the brain. The lips parted in a smile and the whole face was lighted up by an ecstatic and beatific expression of rapture not only beyond description but impossible of reproduction by the camera. This ecstasy was the realisation of the Formless Brahman.

The Paramhansa used to say that it was impossible to convey in words the experience of Samadhi.

I recollect that there were men at that time, men who called themselves religious, who declared that the ecstatic trances of Ramkrishna were a kind of epileptic fits. The idea that these people had of religion was argument, acrimonious discussion, sanctimonious superiority. The intensity of divine love and the rapture of realisation were unknown to them.

What words do I remember of the many orators I have heard? They have passed down the wind. Ramkrishna's words live in the memory as I heard them fifty-five years ago and I cannot forget them if I would, for his words, as I have said, were with power, with grace, with healing and with solace.

After seeing and hearing Ramkrishna I went and saw Mahendranath Gupta, who was related to

me and was my senior by several years and told him everything and urged him to go to Dakshineswar. This he did the following year and he was so much impressed by the manner of speaking of Ramkrishna that he began keeping a diary in which he wrote down everything Ramkrishna said. He told me that what he heard in a day it took him three days to write. He had to work for a living and was a teacher and a professor. In the Ramkrishna Mission he is known as Master Mahasay. These diaries were the beginning of the Gospel of Paramhansa Ramkrishna according to "M." In the original Bengali it is known as Sri Ramkrishna-kathamrita, the Nectar of the Words of Ramkrishna. This is the only authentic and, to a certain extent, complete record of the sayings of Ramkrishna. Mahendranath could not go every day, nor could he stay constantly with the Master, and it is quite possible that there might have been other valuable and luminous sayings that were not recorded. The disciples who were always with

Ramkrishna and afterwards renounced the world were so entirely under the influence of the personal magnetism of the Guru that it never occurred to them to record his priceless sayings from day to day and hour to hour. It is due to the devotion and patient labour of a lay disciple that the sayings of Ramkrishna have been preserved and every collection of his sayings published is mainly derived from this source, except perhaps the short collection published by Swami Brahmananda, a beloved disciple of Ramkrishna and the first President of the Ramkrishna Mission.

Shortly after I had seen and heard Ramkrishna I was called away to the other end of India at Karachi. I never saw him again in life, but I was again in Calcutta when Paramhansa Ramkrishna passed into his final rest on August 16, 1886. As I was going out of the house in the afternoon a printed slip was handed to me announcing that Paramhansa Ramkrishna had passed into the final

Maha-samadhi. I drove straight to the garden house at Cossipore where the august patient had passed his last days, surrounded and tended with unremitting love and devotion by his disciples, admirers and worshippers. There he lay on a handsome bed cover with a fresh white sheet and flowers in front of the portico of the house under the open sky. He lay on his right side, a pillow under his head and another between his legs. The lips which had never ceased teaching even during the months he had been suffering from the intolerable agony of cancer of the throat were stilled in the silence of death. The final serenity, the calm, the peace and the supreme majesty of death were on the face, now smooth and relaxed in its last repose. The smile on the lips showed that the spirit had passed in the rapture of samadhi. Narendranath (Vivekananda), Mahendranath and other disciples, Trilokyanath of the New Dispensation Church of the Brahmo Samaj and others were sitting on the ground. As I sat down

beside them and looked at the ineffable peace of the face before us the words of Ramkrishna came back to me that the body is merely a sheath and the indwelling real Self is difficult of realisation. And as we sat in the waning afternoon, waiting for the heat of the day to pass before carrying the remains to the cremation ground, a single cloud passed overhead and a small shower of very large drops of rain fell. Those present said this was the *pushpa-vrishti*, the rain of flowers from heaven of which the ancient books write, the welcome of the immortal gods to a mortal man, passing from mortality to immortality, one of the great ones of earth and heaven.

I am convinced that length of years has been granted to me in order that I may be able to bear testimony in the sight and hearing of men that I have seen Ramkrishna and heard him speak in life and I have seen him in the peace and serenity of death.

How Time adjusts its own place and perspective! Undignified squabbles have been heard about how Ramkrishna came to be known to the educated classes in Bengal. It has been alleged that if it had not been for the accident of some distinguished man or another meeting him no one would have heard of the saint of Dakshineswar. If that had been so, so much the worse for humanity, but these quibbles are not worth even a passing thought. Among the men who came into contact with Paramhansa Ramkrishna there is not one who will hold the same place in the history of religions or high spiritual manifestation. Of the wealthy men who visited him, or to whose houses he went, not one will be remembered except for the accident of his name having been mentioned in the Gospel of Paramhansa Ramkrishna. Most of them are already forgotten and their titles and wealth are dust. Some regarded him as an eccentric man, others looked upon him as a curiosity. All these men have passed into oblivion while Time has

definitely fixed Ramkrishna's place among the great Teachers of humanity. The few young men he gathered around him all attained great spiritual eminence, while Vivekananda, his most beloved and belauded disciple, has won imperishable fame as prophet, patriot, teacher and heroic champion of his people and his ancient faith.

There are a few cardinal features of Ramkrishna's doctrine that stand out from the rest. The first and foremost is the famous apothegm, as many Faiths, so many Paths. He himself practised the teachings of many religions. To understand him is to recognise the truth in all religions; to revere all, and condemn none. Every Faith, every religion is a path leading to God, or the Truth. Next, there is the emphatic declaration shattering the doleful doctrine of original sin, that man is born in sin and his heritage is sin. Ramkrishna would have none of it. What, he exclaims, man is a son of God, how can he be a sinner born? If

he errs, he has only to say sincerely that he will not err again and he is forgiven. The man who repeatedly says he is a sinner becomes a sinner in actual fact. Why, again, says Ramkrishna, do men talk so much about the mercy of God? Man is entitled to the love of God because God is his Father. Why should he clamour for the mercy of God? In the intensity of his own realisation, in the constant rapture of communion he brought man much nearer God than ever known before.

What is the place to be assigned to this latest of the Masters by his disciples and followers? So far as the monks of the Ramkrishna Order are concerned and the householders who worship him the question appears to have been finally answered. They regard him as an incarnation of God. He is among the Avatars, superseding the doctrine of the ten avatars. In India this is not such a big thing as it would appear to an outsider. People belonging to other lands and other religions would be shocked

at the idea of a man being called God-incarnate. Not so in India. There is no form of religious belief which has not been held in India, some time or other, by some people. Many obscure men have been called Avatars; they are completely forgotten; there may be several avatars at this moment. One man called himself the Lord God and even he had some followers. Many such mushroom sects have appeared and died out. The only two avatars that need be named are Rama and Krishna. The number of temples dedicated to Rama is not large; in a certain part of India men call on his name; his name is pronounced when a man is dying and after death. In other parts people call on Hari, who is identified with Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna is worshipped in many temples, but his worshippers form only a sect of Hindus, because all Hindus do not worship Sri Krishna. No avatar is accepted as universal God, nor is any avatar worshipped as the only and sole incarnation of God.

There is nothing in the teaching of Ramkrishna that can be distinguished as Vaishnavism, Saivism, Tantric or any other doctrine. Upto the present time every morning and evening *arati* is performed in the Ramkrishna Mission House as in any Hindu temple. In the room of worship itself a small photograph of Ramkrishna is kept. This is the object of worship. For religious instruction the Gita is read and expounded. That is a teaching of Sri Krishna. It imparts no distinctiveness to the Ramkrishna organisation. If in the Ramkrishna temples that are being built an image of Ramkrishna is set up it will be worshipped as other images are worshipped. Other rituals may be introduced and odes of invocation may be composed. If so, it will be adding one more sect to the innumerable sects in India, and at no time can it attain the size and proportion of either the Saiva or the Vaishnava sect.

Ramkrishna never wanted to found a new religion or sect. If a new sect is founded it may

be a new path, but how is it to be made a new religion? The room of Paramhansa Ramkrishna at Dakshineswar is standing now as he left it. The walls are covered with the likenesses of the founders of different faiths. The Master did not found a new religion; he taught as he himself practised reverence to all existing religions. A new sect will be lost in the jungle of sects in India. In appearance a Ramkrishna Mission House is just like a Hindu temple, but there is this marked distinction that it is barred against none, and in actual practice Zoroastrians and Christians do go to Ramkrishna Missions, but Jews and Muslims cannot on account of the miniature kept in the room of worship.

It must be recognised that the spirit of reverence and adoration in India is stronger than in any other country. When bowing to an elder both the feet are touched. People prostrate themselves before an image of worship. It is very

easy to call a man an incarnation of God, but that does not ensure the wide acceptance of that man as a Teacher. The utmost enthusiasm about Sri Krishna has not succeeded in his being worshipped by all Hindus, let alone other nations. The doctrine of divine incarnation is very impressive but it can never become universal.

On the 24th February, 1936, the birthday centenary of Paramhansa Ramkrishna, I was present at the celebration at the Ramkrishna Mission at Khar, a few miles from Bombay. In the morning Vedic hymns were chanted. In the evening a Parsee lady sat on the floor in front of the room of worship and sang beautifully some hymns from Mira Bai and others. Shortly afterwards a fairly large number of persons sat down on the floor in the library room to partake of *prasada*. Among them were Gujratis, Deccanis, Madrasis, Parsis, Bengalis, English and Americans, men and women. Scarcely had the meal concluded

when an Indian lady burst out into a song of praise, full of the deepest emotion. The religions represented were Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Bahaism. From beginning to end the whole affair appeared to me to be typical of the significance of the special mission of Ramkrishna. Here was a confluence of all religions, each one maintaining its distinctiveness. Here were the many paths of many faiths, and the people treading those paths. Many names, but a single Truth. This was the democracy of religions, each one having the same status and each meeting the others on terms of perfect equality.

India should be deeply grateful—not proud—that she should have given birth to this the latest of the prophets, a man whose breadth of vision, catholicity of faith and vivid intensity of the realisation of God have proved a revelation to the whole world. There is a still deeper significance in the Gospel of Paramhansa Ramkrishna. It has

helped to make the roots of Indian thought and Indian wisdom deeper and stronger. It has shown how sheer spiritual power can rout learning, wealth, social distinction. This power, manifesting itself in various ways, will ultimately bring about the emancipation and salvation of India. While the West is being torn by dissensions, suspicions, and the constant menace of war, India is making the foundations of the future stronger on the bedrock of faith and sacrifice.

For the sayings of Ramkrishna I have had to rely mainly upon the Gospel by Mahendranath Gupta. There are only one or two that I have written from personal knowledge.

Om! Shanti, Shanti, Shanti!

Nagendranath Gupta

Bandra, Bombay,
April, 1936.

**THE SAYINGS OF
PARAMHANSA RAMKRISHNA**

SAYINGS OF
PARAMHANSA RAMKRISHNA

As many Faiths so many Paths.

(All religions are paths leading to God).

* * *

There is nothing wrong in your being engaged in the work of the world. Do your work with one hand and with the other held on to God. When your work is finished lay hold of God with both hands.

* * *

The black bee hums while hovering about a lotus flower. When it settles down on the flower and begins to sip honey it becomes silent. (One talks and argues about God so long as God is not realised. The moment that happens all words cease).

* * *

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When that time comes the hair stands on end and tears flow from the eyes by repeating the name of Hari or Rama only once, then know for certain that elaborate forms of worship will no longer be necessary. The right to give up Karma has been acquired, Karma will cease of itself.

* * *

O Mother (Kali) I take refuge in you, I take refuge in you. I do not want the pleasures of the body, I do not want to be honoured by the people. I do not want miraculous powers. Only grant this that I may have pure devotion at your lotus feet, devotion without desire, clean, without cause. And, Mother, grant that I may not be allured by your world—entrancing Maya, that I may never love the world of your Maya, women or gold. Mother, I have no one except you. I am without worship, accomplishment, *jnan* and *bhakti*; out of your compassion give me devotion at your lotus feet.

* * *

Everything rests with the mind. The mind makes bonds and the mind sets one free. Everything is dyed with the mind. Clothes that come from washing can be dyed any colour. He who knows a little English spouts English words. If it is a Pandit who has read Sanskrit he will recite Sanskrit verses. The man who keeps bad company thinks like his associates. If you live with devotees you will think and speak of God.

* * *

It is good to have some faith. If you believe in the Formless it is well. But do not think that only this is right and every other belief is wrong. Know that the Formless is true and that which has Form is also true. Hold to the one in which you have faith.

* * *

When one has to fight it is best to fight from inside the fort (home). Fight with the senses,

hunger and thirst. This battle has to be fought in the world itself.

*** * ***

In this Iron Age food is the chief problem; sometimes one has to go without it. Then all about God is forgotten.

*** * ***

Earn money by honest means. The object is not wealth, but the service of God. The money that is spent in the service of God is well spent.

*** * ***

Do not submit to injustice and untruth in silence. Suppose an abandoned woman attempts to jeopardise your spiritual welfare, she must be resisted with heroic resolution.

*** * ***

Living with other people some resistance has to be displayed to save yourself. Imitate the hiss

of a serpent to frighten evil people but do not pour poison into them, do not seek to harm them.

* * *

What use is it becoming a pandit if there is neither discrimination nor renunciation? When I think of the lotus feet of God I reach a particular state. The cloth I wear slips to the ground, something rises tingling from the feet to the head. Then men seem of no account. If I see a learned man without discrimination or love for God he seems like a straw blown in the wind.

* * *

Bankim (Bankim Chandra Chatterji, the author of the Bande Mataram song) is a very learned man. I met him and asked him what was the duty of man. He replied in a spirit of levity: "eating, sleeping and cohabiting with a woman." I was disgusted and said, when a man eats radish his eructation smells of radish.

* * *

There is a vast difference between a Pandit and a Sadhu. The man who is merely learned is full of worldly desire. The Sadhu's mind is at the lotus feet of Hari. The Pandit says one thing, does another. The Sadhu is different. His action, his speech are altogether of another nature.

* * *

To feed people is in a manner to serve God. He exists in all life as fire. To feed people is to sacrifice to the fire of hunger that represents Him.

* * *

Every woman represents the creative Energy (Sakti), the Mother. A daughter is a form of Sakti—the Energy of creation.

* * *

The Lord of the Universe gives to each what he deserves. The Mother gives to each child the food it can digest.

* * *

If it is an error to worship an idol of clay does He not know that the object is to worship Him? He is satisfied with it. Why need you worry?

* * *

When you mingle with other people love them all. Become one with them, let all ill-feeling vanish. Men have different natures; knowing that associate with them as best you can. And love them. Then retire to your home and enjoy peace and joy.

* * *

There was a goldsmith's shop. The goldsmith and his assistants were very devout, earnest Vaishnavas. They had a garland of beads round the neck, the mark on the forehead and beads in their hands for repeating the name of Hari. All customers used to come to this shop knowing they would not be cheated because the goldsmith was a devout person. When a party of customers came

one of the workmen in the shop would say, Keshava, Keshava (a name of Vishnu, also meaning Who are these?) Another would say, Gopal, Gopal (a name of young Sri Krishna, also meaning A herd of cows, fools). A third would mumble, Hari, Hari (a name of the Lord, also meaning, Shall we rob them?). The last man, would say, Hara, Hara (a name of Siva, also meaning, Rob them). In the end, the confiding villagers were fleeced.

* * *

A wealthy Marwari, a Vedantist, used to come here. Seeing my bed unclean he offered to give me Rs. 10,000 in promissory notes, the interest on which would meet my expenses. I fainted at once. When I recovered my senses I said, 'If you speak like that do not come here again. I cannot touch money, I cannot keep any money.'

* * *

Salute all Faiths, but have devotion and love for one. Bow down to all Beliefs, but pour out

your soul in love to one. The wife tends her husband's brothers and others by offering them water to wash their feet and spread out seats for them, but she serves no one else as she serves her husband. The relationship with the husband is different.

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I saw one single Consciousness, indistinguishable from others. In it there are gentle folk, Englishmen, Mussalmans, I myself, those that cremate the dead, dogs and a bearded Mussalman with a plate of boiled rice in his hand. I also tasted a little. He (God) showed there is no distinction, all are one.

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I saw the Lord of Eternal Bliss coming out of the sheath (the body) and He said, 'I am born from age to age' He said, 'Even Chaitanya, the Prophet, worshipped Sakti.' I saw the full Avatar, with an opulence of goodness.

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After realising God all the various phases mentioned in *Bhagavat* happened to me. I felt alternately like a child, a madman, like one frenzied and also quite inert. And I had also visions like those mentioned in the *Sastras*. Sometimes I saw sparks of fire everywhere, sometimes there were lakes of quicksilver on every side, glittering in the light. Again, I saw sheets of molten silver and sometimes dazzling light like that of fireworks.

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My state was indescribable. One aspect followed another. It was like a see-saw, rising at one end and falling at the other. When I was introspective, in *Samadhi*, then I saw Him; when the mind came back to the outer world then also I saw Him. In the mirror I saw Him, when I turned round the mirror then also I saw Him.

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The spider spins its web out of itself and lives on the web. God is the container of the world and also the contained.

* * *

In the intensity of my devotion I used to open my mouth wide from the heavens to the nether regions and call upon the Mother (Kali) as if I was seizing hold of Her and bringing Her forward. It were as if fish were being dragged in a net.

* * *

Wife, son, father and mother, live with them and tend them all. Treat them all as your own But know in your mind that they are nothing to you. Do your work but think of God

* * *

Have faith in your Guru It is not for you to judge his conduct. A broom is untouchable, but it makes a place clean.

* * *

He who has seen God realises that the mother of the daughter is part of the divine Mother and therefore he worships all women as Mother.

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The mind of the man of the world, even when engaged in high pursuits, always turns to the world. The vulture flies high in the sky and moves in the pure ether, but its eyes are ever turned earthward in search of the carrion on which it feeds.

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The Ganges flows for all, but a man fences in a little of it and calls it his Ganga. (God is for all and cannot be appropriated by any one).

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When the avatar Narasimha tore open the entrails of Hiranyakasipu with his claws he wound them round his head, 'saying, 'These are the entrails out of which my Prahlada was born.' So

I salute the mother of Keshub Chunder Sen, because she held him in her womb.

* * *

Two Sadhus while moving about came to a city. One of them was going about open-mouthed looking at the bazar, shops and houses, when the other met him, and asked him, 'You are wandering about the city, where are your things?' The other Sadhu said, 'I have got a lodging and put my things there. I have locked the room and am now going about seeing the city. Have you found a place?' (Realise God first and then move about in the world).

* * *

I cannot touch coin, a metal vessel or a woman. I feel a severe pricking pain in my arm.

* * *

Worldly people do not like to hear the name of Hari. They say it is a name to be heard when

death is approaching. On their deathbed they will say that the light should be lowered so that the lamp may not consume too much oil.

* * *

Why are holy men or prophets disregarded by people near them? The relations and intimate friends of a juggler do not care to see his tricks but others are filled with wonder when they see them.

* * *

The path of *Jnan* is very difficult. Worldly desire, the lust for women and gold present insuperable difficulties. This path is not suited for the Iron Age.

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Karmayoga is very difficult. It is very difficult to do the Karma taught in the *Sastras* in the present age. The struggle for existence leaves little time for Karma. In the present Iron Age Bhakti Yoga is the best, to sing the qualities of

God and to pray. Bhaktiyoga is the faith of the present Yuga.

* * *

Why should the world be unreal? Such discussions are matters of argument. He himself has manifested himself in every shape, even in the cat.

* * *

There is nothing in learning itself. Books are to be read to know Him.

* * *

What is to be had from wealth? One gets food, clothing and a place to live in. That is all. One does not find God by wealth. Consequently, wealth cannot be the aim of life.

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It is no use being merely a learned man. Instruction should not be sought from a learned man who does not consider the world impermanent.

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The defect of reading sacred books is that they conduce to argument and disputation. In books and sacred writings sand and sugar are mixed. The holy man discards the sand and takes only the sugar.

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The *Sastras* have two meanings, one is the meaning of the words, the other is the purport. The latter alone should be accepted because it coincides with the word of God. The language of a letter differs from the spoken words of the writer of the letter. The *Sastras* represent the language of the letter; the word of God is the word of the mouth.

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If one boldly declares that he is not bound but free he becomes free. He who repeatedly says he is bound becomes actually bound. He who repeats day and night that he is a sinner becomes a sinner in real fact.

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Who are you that you say you can benefit the world? See Him through devotion; acquire Him. If He gives you the power then you can work the weal of others, not otherwise.

* * *

The teaching of men cannot be done by human power. A man who can do so must derive his power from God. And he cannot teach men without renunciation.

* * *

Do not speak ill of any one—not even a worm.

* * *

By weeping with great longing God may be found.

* * *

Seeing many people together awakens a consciousness of God.

* * *

What arises in a pure mind is a note of God's lute.

* * *

The fewer people know when you are thinking of God the better.

* * *

By the imposition of an idea the mind changes. By thinking of the female principle of creation lust and other evils gradually disappear.

* * *

Meditate in your mind, in a corner and in the forest. Distinguish always between the impermanent and the eternal. God alone is eternal; everything else is impermanent. By thinking like this the impermanent will be forgotten.

* * *

When the tree is a sapling it must be protected by a fence otherwise it may be eaten by cattle. When the tree grows no fence is needed and an elephant can be tied to it. (Carefully cherish your faith while it is young; when it becomes firm it cannot be uprooted).

* * *

The world is like water and the mind is like milk, which easily mixes with water. But if milk is made into curds and butter is churned out, the butter will float on water and will not mix with it. (The mind is easily lost in affairs of the world, but if it is concentrated upon God it becomes detached from the world).

* * *

How is God to be loved? As the mother loves her child, as the faithful wife loves her husband, as the man of the world loves worldly things. Combine these three forms of love and then you may behold God.

* * *

What is there in a beautiful woman? Her body is made of bone, flesh, fat and all sorts of secretions. Why does man leave God and think of these things? Why does he forget God?

* * *

God is in all beings, but a distinction has to be made between men who are good and others who are evil. Mix with good men but keep aloof from those who are evil. Narayan exists in a tiger also but you cannot embrace a tiger. Those who warn you to keep away from a tiger have also God in them and their advice should be heeded.

* * *

There are four kinds of men—those that are in bonds, those that are trying to be free, those that are free, and those that are free but live in the world to teach other men.

* * *

Rama was an avatar and an incarnation of God, but to go to Lanka (Ceylon) he had to construct a bridge. On the other hand, Hanuman, who had faith in the name of Rama, leaped over the sea to Ceylon. He did not require a bridge.

* * *

Bibhishan, who succeeded Ravana as King of Ceylon, took a leaf, wrote on it the name of Rama and tied it in the cloth of a man and told him to walk across the water in perfect safety. He was told to go in faith, but if assailed by doubt he would be drowned. The man walked over the water without any difficulty but after some time he felt very curious about the talisman given to him. So he opened the knot and found a leaf with merely the name of Rama written on it. 'Is that all?' he exclaimed in doubting wonder, and was immediately drowned.

* * *

Love (Prema) of God does not come to all. Chaitanya had it. Avatars have it. When this love comes not only does the world appear unreal, but the body, which is a thing of great solicitude, is forgotten. Love makes one soft, tender. It supplies the cord wherewith to bind God. When

the cord is pulled He is seen. When you call Him He will be found.

* * *

The light of a man of the world, is just sufficient to light the room, that is, it helps him to look after his family and maintain himself. The light of a devotee is like moonlight, it helps to see inside and outside but it is not powerful enough to show distant or small objects. The light of a *Jnani* (wise man) is like that of the sun. He sees everything, inside and out, far and near.

* * *

You can safely walk upon thorns with shoes on; shod with spiritual knowledge you can as safely roam over this thorny world.

* * *

The Absolute (Brahman) cannot be thought of apart from the Relative phenomenal world (Sakti). The original Sakti makes the creation, sustains the universe and brings about the destruction

of chaos. The name of this Energy is Kali. Kali is Brahman and Brahman is Kali. When quiescent we call this Power Brahman; when active we call the same Power Kali.

* * *

There are many forms of the Mother Kali. When there is Pralaya (chaos) she gathers the seeds of creation and stores them for the next creation.

* * *

Everything depends on the mind. Man is in bondage or free according to his mind. The mind is like clothes from the washing. Dye it in any colour you like. If a man has read a little English he uses English words; if he has read Sanskrit he repeats Sanskrit verses and sayings. If a man keeps bad company he will think and speak in a bad way; if he mixes with devotees he will speak about God. The mind accounts for all.

* * *

I asked the Mother Kali for Bhakti (devotional love) alone. I placed flowers on her lotus feet and said, 'Mother, take my sin, take my merit, give me pure Bhakti; take my wisdom, take my ignorance, give me pure Bhakti; take my cleanliness, take my uncleanness, give me pure Bhakti; take my religion, take my irreligiousness, give me pure Bhakti. But I could not add, take my truth, take my untruth, give me pure Bhakti.

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If one goes out of the family and weeps for God for even three days that is good. If one meditates on Him in solitude even that is good. Men weep copiously for their wives and children; who weeps for God?

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Do you know my state? I take my food and have no cares. The Mother knows the rest.

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It is very difficult to be a teacher of men. If God appears and there is a commandment from Him then it is possible. Then a mountain can be moved. What is to be gained by mere lectures? People will listen to them for some time and will then forget them. And they will not follow the advice given.

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One must have a badge (from God) to be able to teach men. Otherwise, it becomes a matter for laughter. He knows nothing himself, what is he to teach others? It is a case of the blind leading the blind.

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If there is no mandate from God the conceit comes, 'I am teaching men.' This conceit is born of ignorance. In ignorance we think we are the masters. When a man understands that God is the Master, He does everything, man does nothing,

then he becomes free. All unhappiness arises from the conceit that man is the doer, the master.

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Gour and Nitai (Chaitanya and Nityananda) made a device to attract worldly men to their doctrine of Vaishnavism. They called it fish soup, the embrace of a young woman and the name of Hari. Fish soup was the tears that flowed from the eyes, the young woman was the earth, her embrace was rolling on the ground calling on the name of Hari.

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I wanted the book of the Christians (the Bible) to be read to me. It was all sin, sin, sin. You in Brahmo Samaj also talk constantly of sin. We are the children of God, sons of the King of Kings. Who can keep us in bonds, how can we be sinful? By naming the Lord the body and the mind become pure.

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When there is a little conceit mixed with devotion then the devotee makes a mark on his forehead. The beads which he turns round on his fingers may contain a bead of gold and he puts on silk while worshipping.

* * *

There can be no end to the conception of God. He is Formless as well as with Form. For the Bhakta (devotee) he is with Form. For the Jnani (wise) he is Formless. Consider Sachchidananda (the Supreme Existence and Bliss) as a shoreless sea. By the intensity of devotion lumps of ice are formed and these are Form, Personal God. When the sun of Wisdom rises the ice melts, then the notion of Personal God disappears and His Form cannot be seen. It cannot be expressed what He is. Who is to say it? He who can say so loses His own ego.

* * *

If you go on reasoning there is nothing left. Take an onion. The first peel is pink, then you

come to white peelings until at last there is nothing to be found. Where the ego is lost how is the supreme Brahman to be realised ?

* * *

A doll made of salt went to measure the sea. As soon as it entered the sea it melted and was lost. Then who was to bring any news ? The sign of full wisdom is silence. The ego, which is the doll of salt, melts and becomes one with the sea of Supreme Bliss, and no distinction remains.

* * *

So long as reasoning is not ended argument proceeds glibly. When it is at an end there is silence. When the pitcher is full there is no sound. So long as the pitcher is not full the sound of filling is heard.

* * *

To the devotee the consciousness of self remains so long as there is reasoning and keeps him at

a distance from God. Why does the colour of Kali the Mother look black and that of Sri Krishna blue? Because they are at a distance. In the distance the sun looks small. If you go near it will become so large that you will not be able to conceive it. A lake from a distance looks green, blue or dark. The sky looks blue from a distance. Go near and there will be no colour.

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Is it possible to know Infinite God? And why need we know Him? Let us only pray that our devotion may reach His lotus feet. A glass of water quenches my thirst. Why need I measure the entire quantity of water in tank? If half a bottle of wine makes me drunk why should it be necessary for me to know the total quantity of wine in the wineseller's shop?

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Why do you describe at such length the wealth of God and mention in detail the things

created by Him ? Plunge in His sweetness. His creation is infinite, infinite is His wealth. How are we concerned with it all ?

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In earlier times the priests of the temple of Govindji at Jaipur did not marry and they were very independent. The Raja once sent for them, but they refused to go and said, 'Let the Raja come to us.' Then the Raja and others induced them to marry when everything changed. They began going to the Raja and asking him for favours in order to bring up their children.

* * *

When God is realised passions like lust and anger merely retain their form. When God is found the ego assumes the attitude of a servant or a devotee and cannot injure any one. When a sword is touched by the philosopher's stone it becomes gold; it retains the shape of a sword but cannot inflict any injury.

* * *

So long as men are occupied with worldly thoughts they can never behold God. If you take a box of damp matches there will be no ignition, only the matches will have to be rubbed and thrown away.

*** * ***

A magnet will not draw a needle covered with mud. When it is washed clear it will be attracted at once. The mind must be purified before God can be realised.

*** * ***

Ordinary people worship God and are also involved in affairs of the world. They are like common flies which settle on sweets as well as filth. The pure in spirit are like bees, they settle on flowers and sip only honey. They drink the nectar of the love of God and are not attracted by the ways of the world.

*** * ***

Those who seek Nirvana are like camphor which, if burned, leaves nothing behind. Wood leaves a residue of ash.

* * *

Brahman cannot be described in words. Four friends, out travelling, saw a place enclosed all round by a wall. One of them mounted the wall, cried out Ha, Ha! and jumped in. All four disappeared like that. Who was then to tell what was enclosed by the wall? When one realises the Supreme Brahman and passes into Samadhi the ego vanishes.

* * *

There is an unripe I (ego). 'I am the master, I have a wife and children. I am the Guru,' all this conceit is the unripe ego. 'I am the servant of God, I am His devotee, He is the doer and Master, not I,' this is the ripe I.

* * *

My nephew Hriday used to tie up a bull calf in the garden every morning. I asked him the

reason. He said he would soon send it home and when it grew up it would be yoked to the plough. As soon as I heard this I fainted outright. How wonderful is the working of Maya! The village is a long way off and this is Calcutta. This calf would go all the way. It would grow up there and then draw the plough. This is what is called the world, this is Maya!

* * *

There is no longing to see or know God so long as the mind is occupied by desire and enjoyment. A child forgets himself in play. Give him some sweets and he will eat them. But when he tires both of play and sweets he wants to go to his mother. Nothing else will satisfy him. Any stranger can take him to his mother. When the desire of the world is ended the soul of man longs for God. He yearns to find God and will listen to any advice.

* * *

The saying I am He (God) may be repeated by Vedantist Sannyasis, but not those who are concerned with the world. When one is doing everything in the world how can he say he is the quiescent All-Soul? Vedantists say the soul is unconcerned, it is unaffected by joy, sorrow, sin, merit, but those who are conscious of the body may suffer. Smoke may blacken the wall but it can do nothing to the sky.

* * *

Maya is love for relations, 'father, mother, brother, sister, wife, son and so on. Compassion is love for all, all beings having life.

* * *

A blind man bathed in the Ganges. His sins were washed away but his sight was not restored. He was suffering for what he had done in his previous life.

* * *

The nearer one approaches God the more the emotions come into play. As the river approaches the sea ebb and flow become more noticeable. For the wise (Jnani) the Ganges flows in a single direction. For him everything is like a dream. He is concerned at all times with the realisation of the Self. Not so with the devotee (Bhakta). In him the river does not flow only one way. There are ebb and flow. He laughs, weeps, dances, sings. The devotee sports with God. Sometimes he swims, then dives and again comes to the surface.

* * *

A tame mongoose has a string tied to its tail and at the end of the string there is a brick. The mongoose jumps up to sit on a window but is dragged back to the ground by the weight of the brick. Similarly, when a man living in the world attempts to rise a little higher than his surroundings and to reach God his entanglements

in the world draw him down back to the affairs
the world.

* * *

One should not be proud of his wealth. If y
say you are rich there are others who are rich
and still others who are even more wealthy. Wh
the glowworm appears in the evening it fancie
gives light to the world. As soon as the star
appear the firefly becomes insignificant. The star
pale when the moon rises. The moon thinks i
is illuminating heaven and earth. Finally, t
sun rises and the moon fades and disappears.

* * *

He who gives his mind and soul to God is a ho
man. He who has renounced worldly pleasures
woman and wealth is a holy man. The holy m
does not look at women with eyes of desire,
keeps aloof from them and when he comes n
women he looks upon them as mothers a
worships them. The holy man always thinks

God and speaks of God, and knowing that God exists in all creatures serves them. These are the signs of a holy man.

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Wherever God appears there is simplicity. King Dasaratha, the father of Rama, was a very simple-minded man, so was Nanda Ghose, the father of Sri Krishna.

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The madness of divine love is wonderful. The pain of separation from Sri Krishna was so terrible for Radha that it became like a flame and the tears that flowed from her eyes were converted into steam and disappeared.

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You must long passionately for God. You may believe in Him as without a Form or with a Form. You may or may not believe that He is incarnated in the flesh as a man, it is enough that you love

Him. Then He Himself will let you know what He is.

*** * ***

The aim of life is to realise God. Work (Karma) is the first chapter of life, it cannot be the object of life. But work without desire is one of the means, not the end or aim.

*** * ***

A woodcutter who had gone to the forest to cut wood, met a Brahmachari, who told him, 'Go forward.' Returning home the woodcutter pondered over these words. One day, thinking over these words he penetrated deeper into the forest and saw numerous trees of sandalwood. He cut these down and began making money. Some time later he went farther and found a silver mine on the bank of a river. This added greatly to his wealth. After some time he made a fresh advance and discovered a gold mine. The next move forward brought him in sight of large quantities of

diamonds and jewels, and he became fabulously wealthy. (Man should not desist from making a continuous advance in spiritual life until he finds God.)

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To call things or persons mine and to love them is Maya. To love all is compassion. If I love the persons of a particular sect, or only the members of the family it is Maya. If I love the people of my own country even that is Maya.' If I love the people of all countries, the followers of all religions it arises from compassion, Bhakti.

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A maidservant speaks of her master's house as her own house, but her own home may be in some village. She points out her master's house and says, 'This is my house.' But she knows that her own home is elsewhere. Again, she calls the children of her master as her own, though she knows they are not her own. In the same way,

I tell those who come to me that they can live in the world, but they should think of God and remember that neither the house nor the family is theirs and everything belongs to God. Their home is with God and they should always pray with longing for devotion to God.

* * *

What have you to do with the number of trees in an orchard, or the number of branches on them? You have come to eat mangoes, eat them and go away. Man is born to love and revere God, not to attempt to measure His infinite attributes.

* * *

You may deliver any number of lectures but they will produce no impression on worldly men. Can you drive a nail into a stone wall? The head of the nail will be broken but stone cannot be pierced. No injury can be inflicted on a crocodile by striking it with a sword.

* * *

Moths are themselves attracted by light, it is not necessary to call them. When one receives a mandate from God then it is not necessary to call men, or to make any announcement that a lecture will be delivered at a certain time. His own attraction draws other people to him, and all sorts of people, even rich men, come to him in crowds. Does the lodestone call the piece of iron? Iron is attracted of itself.

* * *

Is wisdom derived from books? There is no end to the wisdom of a man who has received a mandate from above.

* * *

I told Narendra (the boy who afterwards became Swami Vivekananda) that God is the sea of emotion. 'Don't you wish to plunge into this sea?' I asked him. 'Suppose there is a pot of this fluid nectar of emotion and you have become a fly. How would you drink it?' He said, 'I would sit on

the edge of the pot and sip the nectar.' 'Why so?' I asked him again. He said, 'If I were to venture deeper I would be drowned.' I assured him, 'Have no fear. The sea of God is the sea of nectar; there is not death in it, but immortality. No one can lose his head by being intoxicated with God.'

* * *

If you find the Mother of the universe you will get both *Bhakti* and *Jnan*. In the first stage of *Samadhi* the Form of God is seen; in the higher or *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* the entire unbroken conception of the God of Consciousness and Bliss is seen, then the ego, name and form disappear.

* * *

If you get devotion staying where you see, where is the need of going to places of pilgrimage? At Benares I saw the same trees, the same tamarind leaves. If no *Bhakti* is derived by going to a place of pilgrimage then nothing is gained by going to such a place.

* * *

One day a number of Sikh sepoy's came to the Dakshineshwar Temple. I met them in front of the temple of Kali. One of them said, 'God, is merciful.' I said, 'Really? How do you know?' He said, 'Maharaj, God gives us food and takes care of us.' I answered, 'Where's the wonder in it? God is the Father of all. If the father does not look after his children is it for a stranger to do so?'

* * *

If you call me a Mahatma you may be justified in a way for the Bhakta (devotee) may be regarded greater than Bhagavan (God) because he carries the Lord in his heart. Sometimes the Lord is the magnet and the devotee the needle, and then He draws the Bhakta to Himself; at other times the Bhakta becomes the magnet and Bhagavan the needle. So powerful is the attraction of the worshipper that fascinated by his love the Lord Himself comes to him.

* * *

He who calls on the Lord from the world itself is the heroic devotee. God says, he who has renounced the world for Him will as a matter of course call on Him and serve Him; where is the heroism in that? If he does not do so others will put him to shame. But he who calls on the Lord from the world itself and pushes aside a tremendously heavy stone to behold Him is brave indeed; he is a hero.

* * *

Live like an ant in this world. The impermanent and the eternal are mixed here; sand is mixed with sugar. Become an ant and pick out the sugar.

* * *

Milk and water are mixed—the essence of the rapture emanating from God and worldly enjoyment. Reject the water and take the milk.

* * *

Live in the world as the mud-eel lives in the mud. Buried in the mud the fish is quite clean and bright looking.

* * *

Hold firmly to One, either the Formless or the One with Form. Then alone can God be realised, not otherwise. If either is firm in his faith he will behold God. Bread made of sugar will taste sweet, no matter how you hold it.

* * *

A fashionably dressed gentleman, stick in hand, strolls in his garden with a friend, and, plucking a flower shows it to his friend, saying, 'What a beautiful flower God has created!' The emotion of this worldly man is momentary like that of a drop of water thrown upon a hot iron.

* * *

I have heard the worship in your church. But why in your Brahmo Samaj is the opulence of God's wealth described at such length? 'O God, Thou hast created the heavens, the sun and moon and stars.' Why need we trouble ourselves with all this? People who go to a rich man's garden house are dumbfounded by what they see—the

trees, the flowers, the drawing-room, pictures in it. How many of them want to see the owner of the garden? Only one or two seek him. If you seek God with intense longing He can be seen and spoken to just as I am speaking to you. Verily, I tell you He can be seen. To whom am I saying this, who will believe me?

* * *

Is God to be found in the sacred books? By reading them merely His existence is known. But unless you take the plunge yourself God does not show Himself. When you are immersed He makes everything known and then all doubt is set at rest. Read any number of books, recite any number of verses, unless you immerse yourself in Him you cannot lay hold of Him. By mere learning men may be deluded but He cannot be deluded.

* * *

Give a general power of attorney to God. If you entrust your work to a good man he never does you

an injury. You leave everything to God and do the work He has given you.

* * *

In the net of the world some men are like fish which never try to escape, some make desperate attempts to escape, some succeed in their attempts and there are others that are never caught.

* * *

Those who are entangled in the world speak of worldly affairs even at the time of death. Lying on his deathbed a man objects to the consumption of too much oil in the night lamp and laments about his wife and children. A parrot repeats the name of Radhakrishna but when it is seized by a cat it screams with its wild cry.

* * *

I am the instrument, He works upon it; I am the house, He is the housewife; I am the locomotive, He is the engineer; I am the chariot, He is the

charioteer; I move as He moves me, I do as He makes me.

* * *

Brahman and Kali are identical. They may be compared with water. When it is motionless it is like Brahman; when the water sways and moves about it is Sakti or Kali.

* * *

How can man, with his little intelligence comprehend God? You cannot put four seers of milk into a pot which holds only one seer.

* * *

Do not sneer at any religion. Do not think lightly of a Hindu, Mussalman or Christian. They all move in such light as has been vouchsafed to them by God.

* * *

Truth is almost a madness with me. Whatever I say has to be done. Also, I cannot carry anything with me for that is laying by and I cannot do it.

* * *

When I was practising that money and dust were the same and I threw a handful of dust and a rupee into the Ganges. I felt a little afraid. Had I despised Lakshmi and would she deny me my daily food? Then I said, Mother Lakshmi, remain in my heart. Some one performed *tapasya* and when the goddess Bhagavati appeared before him to offer him a boon he said, Mother, give me this boon that I may eat my food with my grandson out of a gold plate. In a single boon he got a grandson, wealth and a golden plate.

* * *

Why does a child cry when it is born? It cries *Kahan, Kahan* (Where, where). It means to say, 'In the womb I was in yoga; I was thinking of the lotus feet of God. Where have I come?'

* * *

When I first saw Keshub Chunder Sen I said, 'This is the one who has shed his tail.' His companions laughed but Keshub said there must be some

meaning in what I had said. I explained that a tadpole remains in water. When it has shed its tail it becomes a frog and can live either on land or in water. Keshub has attained a spiritual state in which he can live in the world and also out of it.

* * *

When Swami Dayanand Saraswati saw Ramkrishna Paramhansa in Samadhi he said, 'We have merely read the Vedas and the Vedanta but this great man is the fruition of it all.'

* * *

When I saw Devendranath Tagore I noticed he had both yoga and Bhoga (meditation and enjoyment of the world). I asked him to tell me something about God and he recited some verses from the Veda and explained them. Before I left him he asked me to come to the anniversary of the Brahmo Samaj, but he said I must come in a *dhoti* and *chadar*. I said I could not become a gentleman. The next day Devendra sent a letter saying that I

should not be taken to the anniversary.' My body might be uncovered and that would not look decent.

* * *

There was a peasant who was very wise. He had an only son who died. He was quite resigned and consoled others. His wife was angry and told him he was very cruel and had not even wept for his son. The man said, 'Last night I dreamed I was a king and I had eight sons. I was very happy. Then my sleep came to an end and with it my dream. I am now perplexed whether I should mourn my eight sons or the one we have lost.' (The realities of the world are only a dream).

* * *

What is this that has happened to me? I cannot touch any metal without feeling physical pain.

* * *

Learned men and pandits talk big, but where are their eyes directed? Towards women and gold,

pleasure of the body and money. It is just like the vultures, they fly high but their gaze is always turned towards the carrion upon which they feed.

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When entering a room Ramkrishna saw a newspaper lying upon a seat. He motioned it to be taken away. A newspaper discusses other people, writes against them and retails scandal. To him it was unholy.

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Those wise men who have to live in the world, subject to the temptations of the world are always in some danger. If you live in a room covered with lamp-black, however careful you may be, some of the black will stick to you.

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A Bhairavi went to the court of King Janaka (the father of Sita in the Ramayana). Seeing a woman Janaka bent his head and lowered his eyes. When the Bhairavi saw this she said, 'King Janaka, you

are still afraid of women?' When full wisdom is attained a man's nature becomes like that of a child of five, he cannot distinguish between men and women.

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A floating piece of rotten wood will not bear the weight of a bird but good, sound timber will carry men, animals and even an elephant. A steam boat not only crosses the water but carries a large load of men.

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Bhakti is like a woman and can go inside a house; *Jnan* stays in the outer apartments.

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Those who are proud of their reading, learning, or wealth cannot acquire *Jnan* (wisdom). If these men are asked to go and see a holy man they raise an objection and do not go. To themselves they say, we are such important people, why should we go?

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Once the moth sees the flame nothing will keep it away, but the flame proceeding from God is the cool light of a jewel and the man attracted is saved instead of being destroyed.

* * *

I have no disciples. I am the disciple of all. All are the sons of God, all are His servants. I am also His son and His servant. Uncle Moon is every one's uncle.

* * *

On one occasion while I lay on the ground in a trance a man kicked me with his boots. There were marks on my body. Others suggested that a report should be made to the chief manager of the temple but I dissuaded them.

* * *

What is the use of being a pandit if there is neither wisdom nor abnegation? When I think of the lotus feet of God my condition becomes peculiar. The cloth I wear slips to the ground, something

moves up from my feet to my head. Then people appear to me to be of no worth. If I see a pandit without discernment or love of God he appears to be a straw.

* * *

God appeared to me when I was young. At the age of eleven I saw something in the field and I became unconscious. From that time I became different. I saw some One else within me. When working as a priest my hand instead of going out to the image came over my own head and I placed the flowers on my own head. The boy who stayed with me would not come near me. He said there was such a light on my face that he felt afraid of coming very near me.

* * *

Live in the world like an unchaste woman, who does all household work but always thinks of her lover (the lover is God).

* * *

Those who go about seeking disciples and showing miracles belong to an inferior order of men. Those who want miraculous powers are also inferior men, such as walking over the water, telling another man's thoughts and so on. It is very difficult for such men to have pure devotion for God.

* * *

The grace of God fills all want. I am an ignorant man, I know nothing, who then says all that I say? This is an inexhaustible storehouse of wisdom. When my words are nearly finished Mother Kali pushes her treasure of wisdom near me.

* * *

Pass beyond wisdom and ignorance then you will be able to know God. To have wisdom of many kinds is ignorance. So is the pride of learning. The certain knowledge that God is in every being is wisdom. When a thorn pierces the foot another thorn is used to take it out. When the first thorn is extracted both are thrown away. To take out

the thorn of ignorance the thorn of wisdom has to be used Then both ignorance and wisdom must be thrown away. God is beyond ignorance and wisdom.

* * *

When I went on a pilgrimage to Benares I found people there talking of worldly affairs. I began to weep and addressing Mother Kali said, 'I was quite happy at Dakshineshwar, for I did not have to listen to such talk there.'

* * *

If a wife becomes a hindrance to the knowledge of God she must be abandoned even if she commits suicide or does anything else.

* * *

There is a saying that when a man goes to bathe in the Ganges his sins leave him and get on to a tree. When he comes from his bath these old sins jump down on his back again.

* * *

God can be found through all religions. Vaishnavas will find Him as well as the Saktas. The Vedantists will find God and the Brahmo Samajists will find Him. Mussalmans, Christians all will find Him. If they are earnest all will find God. Some people quarrel about this. Some say, there will be no salvation if you do not worship our Sri Krishna, others say, you will gain nothing if you do not worship our Mother Kali, still others will say there will be no salvation if you do not become Christians. All this is dogmatism. It is wrong to say my religion alone is right and others are wrong. God may be reached by many paths.

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By becoming low you rise high. The lark builds its nest in the ground but flies very high. You cannot cultivate paddy on high ground; it must be low land where water accumulates, then you cultivate a crop.

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Wealth alone does not make a man rich. In a wealthy man's house every room should be lighted. Poor people cannot afford the cost of oil and their rooms are not well lighted. This temple of the body should not be kept in the dark, it should be lighted by the lamp of *Jnan* (wisdom).

* * *

When meditating on God you must plunge in His depth. By floating on the surface can you obtain the gems at the bottom of the sea?

* * *

Some are awakened. There are signs of it. They dislike all conversation except that relating to God. There are seas and many rivers full of water, but the lark will only drink the water that falls from rain. It may be dying of thirst but it will not drink any other water.

* * *

Sometimes you find an awakening coming to a man of the world, like the fitful flame of a lamp, no, no,

like a ray of sunlight. The light comes as through a chink. A worldly man takes the name of God. There is not much love. Children swear by God because they hear their elders doing so.

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The ignorance about "I" and "Mine." If you think about it you will find that what you call "I," "I" is nothing but the soul. Just consider are you the body, the bone, the flesh or any other part of the physical body? Then you will see you are nothing. You have no distinguishing attribute. Then in the negative you say, 'I have done nothing, I have no fault, I have no merit. There is neither sin, nor virtue.' This is gold, this is brass, this sense of distinction is called ignorance. Everything is gold—this proceeds from *Jnan* (Wisdom).

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How long does a child cry? So long as it cannot suckle the breast. Then its crying stops. It drinks

the mother's milk joyfully. While doing so it sometimes plays, sometimes laughs. (So with the seeker after God the Mother).

* * *

God is manifest in all, but more so in man. Where there is the unsophisticated, pure nature of a child, the child laughs, weeps, dances, sings; there God is actually present.

* * *

The home, family, children are impermanent, one has them for a little while. The palm tree alone is true. Some of the fruit drop down. Why mourn for them ?

* * *

Some people went to Ramkrishna in great excitement and told him, 'Lord, have you heard this ? A Mussalman Fakir has come to Calcutta and he walked across the Ganges last night !' Of course no one had actually seen this. Paramhansa

Ramkrishna laughed and said, 'That's nothing. I can do something more wonderful.' His hearers were greatly excited with the expectation that he was going to show them some miracle. Ramkrishna said with quiet mirth, 'I can cross the Ganges by paying a pice to the ferry boat.'

* * *

The world is a place for work. Men come here to work. People live in other places but come to Calcutta to work.

* * *

The seed of the name of God is very powerful. It destroys ignorance and evil. A seed is very tender, so is the seedling. Yet it pierces the hard earth. It makes the earth crack.

* * *

Keep your mind always on God. At first one has to work hard, then enjoy your pension.

* * *

As long as we do not realise God we think we are free. God allows this error to remain, else there would be a great increase of sin. There would have been no fear of sin, no punishment for sin.

* * *

If any one speaks of God people do not believe him. If a saintly man says he has seen God people do not accept his word. They think, if he has seen God let him show God to others. But one cannot learn how to feel the pulse in a single day. One must go round with a physician for a long time to learn it.

* * *

Three friends were passing through a forest when a tiger appeared before them. One said, 'Brother, we shall all be killed.' The second said, 'Why shall we be killed? Let us call upon God.' The third said, 'Why trouble Him? Here is a tree, let us climb it!'

* * *

Some one told me, 'Why do you think so much about the boys, (Vivekananda and others)? That disturbs your thoughts about God.' Then I saw in *Samadhi* that in pure humanity God appeared, and I was satisfied.

* * *

When I first saw Narendra (Vivekananda) I noticed that the consciousness of the body was absent. I touched his breast and he lost consciousness at once. On regaining consciousness he cried out, 'What have you done to me? I have my father and mother.' My desire to see Narendra began growing stronger.

* * *

What experiences have I had! The slightest cause awakened my spirit. I worshipped in due form a girl of fourteen years. I saw in her the Mother in person. I prostrated myself before her and offered a rupee. I worshipped unmarried virgins. I beheld in them the Mother incarnate.

* * *

One day I saw under a tree a girl wearing a blue sari. She was a prostitute. Immediately the realisation of the pure Sita came to me. I forgot the girl but I saw Sita rescued from Lanka (Ceylon) and going to Rama. I remained for a long time in *Samadhi*.

* * *

I went to the Calcutta maidan one day. A balloon was to rise from there. Suddenly I saw a boy—European—standing leaning against a tree, in the posture of the boy Sri Krishna with crossed legs. At once the thought of Sri Krishna was awakened and I passed into *Samadhi*.

* * *

A fisherman was stealing some fish with some nets at night in a pond in a garden. The owner happened to know this and with the help of his men and lighted torches he went to search for the thief. They found no thief but they found a Sadhu covered with ashes sitting under a tree in deep

meditation. This was really the thief. The next day the whole village heard that a saintly Sadhu had come to the garden and people came to him with offerings of fruits, sweets and money and bowed at his feet. Then the man wondered and thought, 'I am not really a Sadhu and still people are showing me such reverence! If I become a true Sadhu I shall assuredly find God.' When this happens by faked devotion what will happen when the devotion is real? Then the devotee knows what is eternal and what is impermanent. God alone is true, the world is passing.

* * *

Where is one to worship? The heart is a well-known place announced by beat of drum. Meditate there.

* * *

If while some one is sweeping some one comes and says, 'So-and-so is dead,' the sweeper goes on sweeping, remarking occasionally, 'What a pity!

He was a good man!' if the dead man is no relation. But if the dead man happens to be related to the sweeper he throws down his broom and sits down on the ground with a cry of grief.

* * *

There is a great difference between a holy man and a learned man. The man who is merely learned thinks of worldly matters, the holy man thinks only of God. The learned man says one thing, but does another.

* * *

The Vedantist Totapuri used to say Brahman is true, the world is false. The juggler comes and shows many tricks, from the seed of the mango to the ripe fruit. All this is a delusion; the juggler himself alone is real.

* * *

There is a state of delirium in the world. Just see how worldly people quarrel. There is no knowing

for what they quarrel. And how they quarrell
'May this misfortune happen to you, may I do this
evil to you!' How they shout, how they abuse!

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We are bound by many bonds but the grace of God
may loosen them in a moment. Do you know what
it is like? Say a room has been in darkness for a
thousand years but the gloom may be dispelled at
once if a light is brought in. The darkness does
not disappear gradually, but instantly, completely.
Have you seen the juggler's trick? He takes a
string with many knots and ties one end some-
where; the other end he takes in his own hand and
shakes the string once or twice and all the knots
are untied at once. But another man cannot do so
even if he tries very hard. By the favour of the
Guru all knots are untied at once.

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Who can know Him? I do not even make an
attempt to do so. I always call on the Mother.

She does what she pleases. She will let me know if it pleases Her to do so, she will not let me know anything, if that is Her will. My nature is that of a kitten; a kitten merely mews. The Mother-cat may keep it where she will, either in the kitchen or in the bed of the master of the house. A child wants his mother; he does not know what wealth the mother may have and he does not want to know. He has no cares because he has his mother.

* * *

The landowner (God) stays everywhere but He frequently sits in a sitting room. The heart of a devotee is His drawing-room. He loves to manifest Himself there. His special power appears in the heart of the devotee.

* * *

God laughs twice. He laughs once when two brothers partition their land, and, measuring with a rope, one brother says, 'This side is mine, that side is yours.' God laughs thinking the world is

His; these two are dividing a little bit of earth between them.

The second time God laughs when a child is seriously ill. The mother is weeping. The physician comes and says, 'Mother, why are you afraid? I shall cure the child.' The physician does not know that when God wills the death of any one there is no power on earth that can save that life.

*** * ***

I cannot say that any one may be healed. I do not ask for such a power from the Mother. I only tell the Mother, Give me pure devotion.

*** * ***

Hatthayoga and Rajyoga. In Rajayoga the union is with the mind, with Bhakti, with discrimination. That is good Yoga. Hatthayoga is not good.

*** * ***

It is not necessary that Karma should be done always. When God is realised no Karma is left.

When the fruit appears the flower drops off of itself.

* * *

How long do young girls play with dolls? So long as they are not married and do not live with their husbands. When they are married they put away their dolls in boxes. When God is realised where is the need for worshipping images?

* * *

I see all people quarrelling with one another about their religions. Hindu, Mussalman, Brahmo Samajist, Sakta, Vaishnava, Saiva are all quarrelling. They have not the sense to understand that He who is called Krishna is also called Siva, Adyasakti, Jesus and Allah. One Rama has a thousand names.

* * *

So long as it is believed that God is elsewhere, at a distance, it is ignorance. When it is believed that God is here, close to us, then it is knowledge.

* * *

The advice of worldly men is to serve both purposes, to attend to your temporal as well as spiritual affairs.

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All religions are paths, no religion in itself is God. If any religion is believed with intense faith God is realised.

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One must be careful about the following:—the man who has wealth; with his money and through his agents he may injure you. You may have sometimes to agree with what he says. The next is a dog. When it rushes at you barking you must quiet it by making coaxing sounds with your mouth. The third is a bull. If it attempts to gore you it should also be quieted with sounds made by the mouth. Then there is the drunkard. If you provoke him he will abuse you filthy. You should tell him, How are you, uncle? Then he will be quite pleased and may sit down by you and

have a smoke. When I see evil men I become careful. If such a man comes and asks whether he may have a smoke I say, yes, he may smoke.

* * *

If a man eats forbidden meat but is attracted towards God he is worthy of all praise. But if another man is very careful about his food but lusts after things of the world he is contemptible.

* * *

Rama! Rama! I know not how to pray, I am without meditation, without Jnan (knowledge), without devotion, I am without holy deeds. Rama! I seek thy refuge! O Rama, I seek thy refuge! I do not want comfort of the body, Rama! I do not want the respect of the people. Rama! I do not want the eight *siddhies* (miraculous power), Rama! Not even a hundred *siddhies*! I take refuge, I take refuge! Grant me only this boon that I may have pure devotion in thy lotus feet, Rama! And that I may not be

**lured by thy world-enchancing maya, Rama! O
Rama, I take refuge in thee!**

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**Is it not better to live on a low rather than a high
level? Water accumulates on a low level, it flows
down from a high level.**

*** * ***

**A little boy hearing thunder and seeing flashes of
lightning told me, 'Uncle, they are striking flint
with steel.' It was a little boy of four or five
years. The same boy wanted to catch a grasshop-
per. While attempting to do so he spoke to the
leaves of plants, 'Keep still,' he said, 'I want to
catch a grasshopper.' To the child everything is
endowed with living consciousness. Simple faith,
the faith of a child is necessary for the realisation
of God.**

*** * ***

**My feeling is that of a child for the Mother. This
is a very pure feeling, there is no danger in it.**

The feeling of sister, that also is good. To feel as towards a wife—the heroic feeling—is very difficult. It is difficult to maintain it.

* * *

I have seen many faiths and many paths. I do not like all these disputations and quarrels. There is no one else here. You are my own people; I tell you that the conclusion at which I have arrived is this: He is full, I am part of Him; He is the Lord, I am His servant; and sometimes I feel He is myself and I am He.

* * *

Until man becomes mad with the love of God He does not take charge of everything. It is only a little child who is taken by the hand and helped to sit down, to take his food. Who does so in the case of grown-up people? When a man is so much absorbed in the thought of God that he cannot take care of himself then God takes care of him.

* * *

A-Bhakta can take the food given by a Chandala (the lowest untouchable class). After seven years of madness in the contemplation of God I went to my village. A prostitute made me take food prepared by her. But I cannot do so now.

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After reading a little of the Gita, the Bhagavat and the Vedanta man thinks he has understood everything. An ant went to a mountain of sugar. It ate one grain of sugar and became full. It took up another grain and carried it to its hole. While doing so it was thinking that when it came next it would carry away the whole mountain.

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How is one to become chaste? By cultivating the notion that one is a woman. For a long time I practised the habits of a sakhi (female companion). I dressed as a woman, wore ornaments, covered my head with a piece of cloth, and performed arati (the ritual of worship) with my head covered.

How else could I keep my wife with me for eight months? We were both the companions of Mother Kali.

* * *

I cannot call myself a man. One day while I was in a state of emotion, my wife asked me, 'What am I to you?' I answered, 'Anandamāyī (the Mother Kali conceived as the embodiment of joy).'

* * *

When going up to the terrace of a house one has to be very careful. If one sways about he may fall down. The weak have to support themselves by the railing of the staircase. Those who have become *siddha* (perfect) are different. After seeing Bhagavan there is not much fear. Once you get on the roof all is well. One can dance on the roof, but not on the stairs.

* * *

When I first saw Keshub Chunder Sen he was seated on the pulpit of the Adi Brahmo Samaj with

others. He was motionless like a block of wood. I told my companion 'Look at him, the fish has taken his bait and the float has sunk (his mind has been concentrated on God).'

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It is possible to meditate on God even with the eyes open. It can be done even while speaking.

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The company one keeps influences the character. There may be evil even in pictures. And people seek others whose nature is similar to his own. Paramhansas keep a few young children near them. They like to remain with children. Children are free from all attributes.

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When you see trees you are reminded of Rishis performing *tapasya* (deep meditation).

* * *

Devotion to God is the one thing essential. The only object should be the realisation of God.

Looking for other things one forgets to seek God. All practice should be for devotion to His lotus feet, He should be called with intense yearning. The mind which is scattered on many things should be collected and concentrated on Him.

* * *

The all-pervading Sakti and the Brahman of the Vedanta are indistinguishable. Like water and its coldness. A serpent and its crooked, creeping movement cannot be dissociated. These are two forms of Brahman, supine and active. When a man puts on a cloth he remains a man. The naked becomes clothed and the clothed becomes naked.

* * *

The Guru was instructing the disciple. He said, 'God alone is your own, no one else is your own.' The disciple said, 'Sir, my mother and my wife take great care of me; they love me greatly and become very anxious when they do not see me.' The Guru said, 'That is your mistake. I shall

show you that no one is your own. Take these pills with you. When you go home swallow them and go to bed. People will think you are dead, but you will retain consciousness and you will see and hear everything. I shall then come there.'

The disciple did as he had been bidden. On taking the pills he became unconscious and motionless. His mother, wife and every one else in the house began weeping and wailing. At this juncture appeared the Guru in the garb of a physician. He heard what had happened and said, 'There is a medicine which can bring him back to life. There is only one condition. This pill must be first taken by some one closely related to him, who regards him as his own and then it will be given to him. But the other person, who is his own dear one, will die. His mother and his wife are here, one of them will doubtless take it. Then the young man will come back to life.'

The apparently dead disciple was listening to everything. The physician called the mother first. The mother was wailing loudly and rolling on the dust. The physician said, 'Mother, you need not weep any longer. You take this pill and your son will be restored to life. But this pill will cause your death.' The mother began thinking with the pill in her hand. Then she began weeping afresh and told the physician, 'I have other sons and daughters; I am thinking what will become of them if I die.' Then the physician called the wife, who was also weeping bitterly, and gave her the pill. She also began to think when she learned that the pill would cause her death. Then she wept and said, 'What has happened to my husband has happened. What will become of my little, fatherless children? Who will save them? How can I take this terrible medicine?'

The effect of the medicine on the disciple was passing off by this time. He understood that no

one could be called his own. He got up suddenly and went away with the Guru.

The Guru told him, 'You have got only One who is your own—God.'

* * *

When the daughter-in-law is with child the mother-in-law makes her work less and less. When the child is born the young mother does nothing else except carrying the baby in her arms and looking after it. She has no other work. When God is found no prayers or meditations are necessary.

* * *

'Attraction for worldly objects disturbs Yoga. See the flame of a lamp. A little wind makes it flicker. The condition of Yoga is like a flame where there is no wind, steady and unflickering.

* * *

Keshub Sen asked me, Why cannot God be seen? I said, You are occupied with the respect other men

show you, learning, and that is why you cannot see God. So long as a child plays with a red toy and sucks it the mother does not come. When he throws away the toy and begins to cry the mother puts aside her household work and comes and takes him in her arms.

* * *

The mind is strewn about; part of it has gone to Dacca, part to Delhi and part to Kuch Behar. All these bits will have to be gathered together and placed in one place. If you want a piece of cloth for sixteen annas the full sixteen annas will have to be paid to the vendor. If there is a slight disturbance Yoga cannot be performed. If there is a hole in a telegraph wire it will not transmit any message.

* * *

Bamboo traps are used to catch fish. The rods of bamboo should be upright but they are bent in order to catch fish. Desire is fish. Therefore, the

mind is bent towards the world. If there is no desire the mind will naturally look upward—Godward.

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There are large stocks of rice and cereals in large shops reaching to the roof. Because of the pest of rats the shopkeeper keeps some fried paddy mixed with molasses in an open basket. These are sweet and roasted and all the rats swarm into them. They know nothing of the large stocks of rice. Men are lost in the attractions of the world, no intelligence of God comes to them.

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Don't be misled by words of flattery. A successful man of the world is always surrounded by flatterers. The body of a dead cow is surrounded by hundreds of vultures.

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Men of the world are the slaves of three persons and what strength can be left to them? They are

the slaves of their wives, they are the slaves of wealth and they are the slaves of their masters.

* * *

In this Age the voice from Heaven is not heard. But it happens that God sometimes speaks through the mouth of a child or a madman.

* * *

Man cannot be a Guru. Everything is done by His will. A great sin, a sin committed long ago, ignorance of long standing may disappear in a moment by His favour.

* * *

What can man do? He can say many things but the final issue rests with God. The lawyer says, I have said all I had to say, the matter now rests with the Judge.

* * *

In *Samadhi* man becomes one with God, the sense of self disappears. Without *samadhi* real *jnan*

(consciousness of knowledge) does not come. What is it like? At noon precisely the sun comes just overhead, a man looks round but cannot find his shadow anywhere. When full consciousness comes in *samadhi* the shadow called ego disappears.

* * *

Jnan and Bhakti (Wisdom and Love) are both paths, go either way and you will find Him. The Jnani sees Him from one point of view, the Bhakta from another. The Jnani's God is full of refulgence, the God of the Bhakta is full of sweetness.

* * *

When you have lost your teeth where is the use of the annual Durga Pujah? You can no longer eat the meat that is sacrificed. (The usual object of worship is worldly gain and not the welfare of the spirit).

* * *

If money is put in my hand the fingers are twisted and I feel suffocated. The touch of a woman is

painful. If a woman touches me I feel as if I am being pricked by thorns.

* * *

If I am sitting alone in my room and a woman comes in I feel at once like a child and the woman appears to be my mother.

* * *

Narendra (afterwards Vivekananda) moves about as if he had a drawn sword in his hand.

* * *

My body seems like a framework of split bamboos covered with clothing. It moves because there is some one inside. My body is like a gourd of which the pulp and seeds have been taken out. There are no passions or attachments inside.

* * *

I see all sheaths with a head that moves. When my mind communes with God then the physical pain lies neglected on one side. Now I see the

indivisible One covered by a skin. The sore in my throat (cancer) lies apart. The property of matter passes to the spirit and matter takes the attribute of the spirit. When the physical body is ill I think I am ill. (At this time Ramkrishna was suffering from an advanced stage of cancer of the throat. He succumbed to it a few months later).

* * *

Brahman is unconcerned. Good and evil, existence and non-existence are for created beings; they do not affect Him. Take the lamp; some one is reading the Bhagavat by its light, another is committing a forgery. The lamp is unconcerned. The sun shines upon the good and the evil alike. If you ask what are we to understand by sorrow, sin trouble the answer is all these are for the created. Brahman is not affected thereby. A snake has poison; if it bites some one that person dies, but the poison does no harm to the snake itself.

* * *

One cannot express by word of mouth what the Brahman is. Everything else has become insipid, defiled. The Vedas, the Puranas, the six Darsanas have been read by the mouth, pronounced by the mouth and thereby they have become defiled. But there is one thing which has never been defiled; it is Brahman. Up to this day no one has been able to say what He is.

* * *

A father had two sons. Both were sent to an Acharya (teacher) to learn Brahmsvidya (the knowledge about God). After some years they came back and saluted the father by bowing down at his feet. The father wanted to know what knowledge they had gained of God. He asked the elder son, 'Son, you have studied all books; what is Brahman like?' The son recited many verses from the Vedas and commenced explaining the identity of Brahman. The father remained silent. Then he put the same question to his younger son.'

This young man hung down his head and was silent. He uttered no word. The father was pleased and said to his younger son, 'Child, you alone have understood a little. It cannot be expressed by word of mouth what God is.'

* * *

Books are to be read to know Him, otherwise there is nothing in learning itself. Some one asked a Sadhu what was written in a book he was carrying. The Sadhu opened the book and showed that on every page were written the two words 'Om Rama', otherwise, the whole book was blank.

* * *

When Lord Chaitanya had gone on a pilgrimage to southern India he saw a man reading the Gita and another man sitting at a little distance and weeping copiously with the tears overflowing his eyes. Chaitanyadeva asked him, 'Do you understand what is being read?' The man said, 'Lord, I do not understand anything of the verses that are

being read.' 'Then why you are weeping?' The devotee said, 'I see Arjuna's chariot and in front of it the Lord Sri Krishna and Arjuna are conversing. I see this and I weep.'

* * *

It is very difficult for ordinary people to remove the conceit of the ego. Cut down a *peepul* tree; new shoots will appear the next day.

* * *

Death should be always remembered. Nothing will be left after death. One comes to the world for a temporary sojourn, for work. The agent of a rich man in charge of his master's garden house says, 'This garden is ours, this tank is ours.' But if he is dismissed for some fault he cannot even take away his box. One of the servants removes it for him.

* * *

Unless the mind is still Yoga cannot be performed. The lamp of the mind is always set flickering by

the wind of the world. If the flame of the lamp becomes quite steady then the state of Yoga is reached.

* * *

I once practised the *rajasic* form of worldly coveting in order to abandon it. I wanted to wear robes of brocade, jewelled rings on the fingers and to smoke a big hubble-bubble with a long pipe. All these were supplied to me. When I had put on those things and had my smoke I said, My soul, these are the grand things of which people speak so much. Then I cast them aside and never thought of them again.

* * *

The mind of a Yogi is always directed towards God, it is concentrated in Self. The eyes are vacant and the look can be recognised at once. It is like that of a bird sitting on its eggs. All its mind is concentrated on the eggs, the eyes barely see other things.

* * *

God cannot be seen with the eyes of the flesh. By meditation another body is formed of *Prema* (intense spiritual love); it has eyes of love (*Prema*), ears of love (*Prema*). With those eyes He is seen, with those ears He is heard.

* * *

A girl is an embodiment of *Sakti*. At a marriage you will notice the bridegroom sits behind like a fool. The girl is fearless.

* * *

One may meditate on the form of one's own mother. She is the Gura and the image of the Supreme Mother.

* * *

I have had to accept every religion by turns—Hindu, Mussalman, Christian I have also come through the paths of the Sakta, Vāishnava and Vedanta. I saw only one God; all come to Him by different ways.

* * *

Coming in a carriage I saw most people with their eyes but downwards, all thinking of providing themselves with food. All were concerned with affairs of the world. I saw only one or two who had their eyes turned upward, thinking of God.

* * *

In a room on the terrace preparations were being made for the worship of the god Narayana. Sandal paste and other things were being got ready. But there was no mention of God. They were talking of the dishes that were to be cooked, supplies in the bazar were not good, yesterday the curry was good and so on. They were talking of their relations and other things. This was the talk in the room of worship.

* * *

In this world both ignorance and knowledge are to be found. Who is to be called a Paramhansa? He who takes the milk and rejects the water even when

the two are mixed. Like an ant he picks out the sugar from the sand even when the two are mixed.

* * *

After God has been seen *Karma* is no longer necessary. That is why my worship was discontinued. Suddenly I saw that everything, the vessels of worship, the seat, the threshold, man, animal were all full of the divine consciousness. Then like a madman I began scattering flowers in all directions and to worship everything I saw.

* * *

Why do I take care of the body? Because I wish to enjoy the company of God. I wish to sing His praise and to go about seeing His wise men and devotees.

* * *

How long does discussion about the Sastras continue? So long as God is not seen. How long does the black bee hum? So long as it does not settle on the flower. It makes no sound when it

begins to sip honey. After seeing God one speaks only about the joy derived from God. A drunken man calls out, Jai Kali! After drinking honey the bee hums a little.

* * *

After God has been seen the passions are burned out. The body looks like an ordinary body, but inside it is vacant and pure.

* * *

What is *Samādhi*? Where the mind become extinct.

* * *

The *jnan* (wisdom) of a worldly man is like a lamp in a room. All that can be seen are one's body and things in the room. The man who has renounced everything is real *Jnani*. His *jnan* is like the sunlight. Everything inside and out can be seen.

* * *

Feeling and want of feeling are both paths. Infinite is Faith. Infinite is the Path.

* * *

A high class Sadhu is like a python. A python does not move but still finds food. A boy Sadhu, A Brahmachari, went out to beg. A young girl brought him alms. Looking at her breasts the young Sadhu thought she had abscesses and asked whether that was so. The elderly ladies of the house explained to him that the young woman would become a mother and milk would appear in the breasts to feed the child. This was the provision made in advance by God. The boy Sadhu was astonished and said he would not beg any more. There must be food for him also.

* * *

The word of the Gurn must be believed. His character should not be judged. A broom is not fit to be touched but it makes clean the place it sweeps.

* * *

The ego persists. There is an infinite expanse of water, on the surface, below, in front, behind, to the right and left. On the water floats a pitcher; there is water in it and around it but the vessel is there. The pitcher represents 'I'.

* * *

When a man loves God he finds Him. This is called Rajbhakti (the love for God acquired in previous incarnations). While cutting down the jungle covering a neglected, deserted house a fountain attached to a pipe line is found. It was covered by earth and brick-dust. As soon as this was cleared the fountain began to work and water gushed out of it.

* * *

While about to bathe in the Pampa lake Rama and his brother Lakshmana thrust the end of their bows on the bank. When they came out and Rama pulled out the bow he saw the end was covered with blood. He said, 'Brother Lakshmana, some

creature has been killed.' Lakshmana dug up the earth and found a large frog dying. Rama in accents of distress said, 'Why did you not make a sound; then we would have tried to save you. When a snake catches you, you make a terrible din ' The frog answered, 'Rama, when a snake catches me I cry, Rama save me, Rama save me! Now I see Rama himself is killing me. Therefore I am silent '

* * *

Those who have inherent love for God do not say that they have been abstemious but have gained nothing. Those who are new farmers give up the land if they do not have a good crop. But those who are hereditary farmers never give up cultivating the land whether the season is bad or good. Their forefathers were on the job and they stick to it.

* * *

He who loves God wishes always to speak about Him. When one loves another he likes to talk and

hear about him; men of the world never tire of speaking of their sons. If some one praises them he gets into favour at once.

* * *

It is an inferior devotee who says God is there—beyond the sky.

* * *

A disciple asked his Guru how he could realise God. The Guru asked the disciple to follow him and taking him to a tank held his head under water for some time. Then he took the disciple out and asked him, 'How did you feel in the water?' The disciple said, 'It was terrible. I felt I was dying.' The Guru said, 'If you feel like that for God you will realise Him.'

* * *

How is one to serve God? With the body, mind and word. With the hand He is to be served and worshipped, the feet are to carry one to His place of worship, the ears are to hear the books about

Him and His praise. The eyes are to see His image. The mind must constantly meditate on Him, and remember His manifestation. With the spoken word one must pray to Him and recount or sing His praise.

* * *

From faith comes Bhakti. This ripens into feeling and the last stage is Prema (Love). Prema is like a cord. God is tied by this to the Bhakta and He cannot get away.

* * *

Many people at their prayers talk about all things. But they are forbidden to speak at that time and so with their closed lips they make all kinds of gestures and they hum and haw. They want this and that, and so on.

Some are turning their beads and bargaining for fish at the same time. While telling their beads they point to a fish with their fingers. All their calculations appear at that time.

Some woman has gone to bathe in the Ganges. Instead of thinking of God at such a time she begins to gossip about all sorts of things. 'What ornaments did you get when your son was married?' 'So-and-so is very ill.' 'Has that man come back from his father-in-law's house?' And this goes on without end.

* * *

The wind sometimes carries a pleasant scent and sometimes a foul odour, but the wind itself is perfectly unaffected.

* * *

The great Rishi Vyasa wanted to cross the Jumna river. There were a number of Gopis (milkmaids) there also. They wanted to go and sell milk, curds, and cream on the other side of the river. But there was no boat and they were all thinking how they were to cross the river, when Vyasadeva said he was feeling very hungry. The Gopis gave him what they had and he ate up a large quantity. Then addressing the river he said, 'Jumna, if I have

eaten nothing let your waters divide and leave us a dry passage.' So it happened and the whole party passed across quite dry.

The two 'I's are different. The second one is the pure Soul unconcerned, beyond all laws It suffers neither from hunger nor thirst, there is neither life nor death. It is free from old age, it is immortal, it is lofty and motionless like Mount Sumeru.

* * *

There was a man who was a great liar, but he also declared that he had received *Brahmajnan* (realised the Brahman). Some one rebuked him and he answered, 'Why, the world is like a dream! If everything is unreal is a true statement alone real? A false statement is false and a true statement is also false.'

* * *

The mother who forbids her son to come here (to me) is not a mother but the image of Ignorance. It is not wrong to disobey her. For the sake of

God the orders of older relations may be justifiably disobeyed. For the sake of Rama Bharata disregarded the mandate of his mother, Kaikeyi. The Gopis did not listen to the prohibition of their husbands when they wanted to see Sri Krishna. Prahlada did not obey his father when speaking of God. For the love of God Bali disregarded the advice of his Guru Sukracharya. In order to reach Rama Bibhishana refused to obey his elder brother, Ravana. Do not obey your parents when you are prohibited to follow the path of God, but in all other matters obey them.

* * *

Those who write in books about God do not themselves understand God. By keeping company with Sadhus one knows about God. People listen to a Sadhu who has really renounced everything. If a man who is merely learned writes a book or instructs by word of mouth it does not produce much effect.

* * *

If one has bright eyes that alone is not sufficient.
The eyes that turn to God are different.

* * *

When the desire for the world (*Kamini-Kanchana*)
passes what is left is *Brahmananda* (rapture in
God).

* * *

A man selling brinjals was asked how much he
could pay for a diamond. He said he could give
nine brinjals but not a single one more.

* * *

Some commit many sins, then in their old age call
upon the name of Hari. Even this is something,
good out of evil.

* * *

In deep meditation the outer consciousness is lost.
A fowler was aiming an arrow to shoot a bird. A
marriage procession passed close to him, there was
the bridegroom's party, torches, music, horses and
carriages. But of all this the fowler knew nothing.

* * *

When there is profound meditation the senses cease to function. The mind does not turn to outer things. It were as if the front door of a house had been bolted. The five senses are shut out.

* * *

Those whose minds are low want psychic or miraculous powers like healing disease, winning a case, walking over the waters and so on.

* * *

To become a Guru is like prostitution. One sells himself for contemptible self and popular praise.

* * *

While practising *sadhana* I was tempted in various ways. I saw the Spirit of Evil offering me many temptations—wealth, women, powers of various kinds. I began calling on the Mother. These are great secrets. When the Mother appeared I prayed to her to slay the Evil Spirit. I remember the Mother's wondrous beauty but a glance from her eyes shook the world.

* * *

In the exalted state of realisation acute agony precedes the feeling of rapture. This feeling is the feeling of God, it rattles the whole body and mind. It is like an elephant entering a small hut. The hut is convulsed. It may be smashed to pieces.

* * *

The fire of the sense of separation from God is not a trifling matter. It is said that the leaves of the tree under which Rupa Sanatan (a famous follower of Chaitanya) sat while in this state were scorched. I was in this state for three days. After that followed rapturous joy.

* * *

My condition is only a precedent. It is not necessary for you all. You have got several things, I have only one. I do not like anything except God. It is as He will. There are trees with several branches, and there are also trees with a single branch.

~ ~ ~

Pray to God with intense longing. Pray for discrimination. He alone is true, everything else is impermanent—this sense is *viveka* (discrimination). Water has to be passed through a strainer—the dirt is cast on one side and on the other is the clean, pure water. Cultivate the strainer which is the power of discrimination. Know God and live in the world. This is called the family of knowledge.

* * *

Different watches may keep different time, but the sun is always correct. Other watches should be set by the sun (God is the sun of truth).

* * *

If you get the joy on this side the other does not seem pleasant. After gaining the rapture of God the world becomes insipid. If you get a shawl you do not like a piece of broadcloth.

* * *

It is only a jeweller who can tell the exact price of a diamond. Dealers in other articles cannot even guess the price of a jewel.

* * *

God's nature is like that of a child. A child may be sitting with a jewel in his lap. Many people pass along the road and ask him for the jewel but he refuses to give it to any one. Then it happens that some one passes by without asking for the precious jewel but the child runs after him and gives it to him unsolicited.

* * *

Why is not the mind of man directed towards God? Because the *Mahamaya* (great illusion) of God is more powerful than Himself. A judge's peon has more power than the judge.

* * *

Lakshman (Rama's brother) was angry with the sea and fitted an arrow to his bow in order to slay it, because it was retarding the passage of Rama's army to Lanka (Ceylon). Rama explained to him that everything was like a dream, an illusion, the sea was impermanent, Lakshman's wrath was also

impermanent; to attempt to kill a falsehood with another falsehood was also false.

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Worldly people are drunk, drunk with the lust for women and gold (*kaminikanchana*); they have lost their senses. That is why I love young boys. The love for the world has not yet taken possession of them. They are good vessels. They may do God's work.

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Some one told me my state is that of flying. The human soul and the supreme soul. The human soul is like a bird and the Supreme soul is like the sky, the sky of consciousness. My soul flies about in the sky of consciousness and that leads to Samadhi.

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God alone is real and everything else is impermanent. Water is real but the bubble on it is fleeting, it disappears in a moment. It disappears

in the water from which it rises. God is like the ocean, His creatures are like bubbles. They are born in Him and are again lost in Him. Children are like small bubbles attached to a big bubble.

* * *

That "I" which is addicted to the world, is to blame. There is nothing wrong with the "I" which calls itself the servant of God. And the "I" of the child is pure, it is not subject to any attribute. A child will quarrel one moment and make friends the next. He patiently builds a doll's house with dust and immediately destroys it. The servant "I" or the "I" of the child is blameless. The Om is not among sounds.

* * *

A man acquired the power of commanding a spirit. As soon as he called the spirit it appeared before him and said, 'Tell me what I have to do. The moment you have no work for me I shall kill you.' The man made the spirit do everything he could.

think of but at length there was nothing more to be done and the spirit threatened to kill him. The man asked the spirit to wait a little and he would come back. He went straight to his Guru and told him of his dilemma. The Guru gave him a hair and advised him to ask the spirit to make it straight. Every time the spirit made the hair straight it curled again so that the spirit could never finish the work.

* * *

The more you advance the fewer will become the distinguishing attributes of God. The devotee first sees a ten-armed goddess. Go further and you will see a god with six arms. Advance still more and you will see two-armed Gopal (a form of Sri Krishna). The farther you go the less will become the opulence. Moving further ahead only a refulgence can be seen—there are no distinguishing attributes.

* * *

Some one was shouting out the name of God. Another man asked him why he was crying out so loudly. God can hear the music of the anklets on the feet of an ant.

* * *

There was a king before whom a Pandit used to read the *Bhagavat* daily. After finishing the reading the Pandit used to ask the Raja, 'Do you understand?' The Raja invariably answered, 'You understand first.' On returning home the Pandit wanted to know why the Raja made such a remark every day. He used to pray and meditate also. Suddenly he understood what the Raja meant. God alone is real and all things else, the home, family, wealth, people, the respect of others, were unreal. Realising the unreality of the world he left it. When doing so he told only one man, 'Tell the Raja I have now understood.'

* * *

God is infinite, He has no end. Kites and vultures may fly as high as they will, they cannot touch the

sky. If you ask what is God like then no description can be given. Even if God is seen He cannot be described by word of mouth.

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They (the boys who became Ramkrishna's disciples) are leaving their homes and coming away. When there is keen dislike for the world it seems like a well and relatives appear like deadly snakes.

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Towards the very end of his illness, when the end was very near, one day Ramkrishna placed his hand on his breast and, speaking with difficulty, said, 'There are two inside this: One is He and the other is the Bhakta. It is the latter who is suffering... To whom shall I say this, who will understand ?'

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I saw that He (God) and the One who is in my heart are the same.

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Brahman and Sakti are indistinguishable. If one does not accept Sakti the world becomes unreal. You and I, the home, the house, the family all become untrue. The world exists because of that primal Sakti. Without the central post no framework can be built, not even a beautiful image of the goddess Durga.

* * *

Even those who are engaged in worldly work, work in an office or trade, should always adhere to the truth. The truth is the *tapasya* of this Iron Age.

* * *

The nearer one approaches God the greater the Peace. Peace, Peace, Peace, Perfect Peace. The nearer one comes to the Ganges the cooler it becomes. After a bath there is greater Peace.

* * *

When the mind is free from attachment God is seen. Whatever arises in a pure mind is His word!

A pure mind, pure reason and a pure soul are the same, because there is nothing pure except God.

* * *

When a father's photograph is seen the father is remembered. In the same way by the worship of an image the form of the Truth is awakened in the mind.

* * *

Do you know what God with a form is like? It is like bubbles rising out of water. From the immense sky of consciousness many forms appear. An *avatar* is also like that. The manifestation of an *avatar* is the pastime of the primal Sakti.

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He who is a Teacher must know many things. To kill another a sword and shield are necessary. To kill oneself a needle or nail-cutter is enough.

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A man who has attained wisdom (*jnani*) ceases to have all desire. What is left does not hurt. If a

sword touches the philosopher's stone it becomes gold, then it cannot be used as a sword for cutting and killing. Similarly, the wise man retains only the gesture of lust and anger. It exists merely in name and does no harm.

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Thoughts of worldly affairs prevent the mind from passing into *samadhi*. When these thoughts disappear there comes firm *Samadhi*. In this condition my body may pass away, but I wish to stay a little longer for devotion and with devotees. Therefore I think a little of the body.

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O Mother (Kali), you have discontinued my worship, let not all desire disappear. A Patanjali is a child, how can a child do without his mother? Therefore, you are the Mother, I am the son. How can a mother's son live without the mother?

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Totapuri, the Advaita gymnosophist, used to say that Sachchidananda (the source of existence, intelligence and bliss, an epithet of the Supreme Spirit) Brahman is like the infinite ocean, above, below, to the right, to the left, water everywhere. Where reasoning stops there is Brahman. If camphor is burnt nothing is left, not even a pinch of ash.

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I shall have to come once again. That is why I am not giving all *jnan* to those around me. Then you would not come to me.

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A mimie disguiser had dressed himself as a Sadhu who has renounced everything. Seeing that his disguise was perfect the Babus offered him a rupee. He shook his head and went away. Then he changed his clothes, washed his face and came back for the rupee. The Babus said, 'Just now you refused the rupee and why have you now come back

for it?' He answered, 'I was then disguised as a Sadhu and could not take any money.'

* * *

The wave belongs to the Ganges, not the Ganges to the wave. I am this and that, I am a great man—without the eradication of this kind of pride God cannot be realised. The mound of 'I' should be wetted by the water of devotion and levelled with the dust.

* * *

Devotion without desire should be cultivated. One should be able to pray to the Lord thus—'I do not desire salvation, honour, wealth, health. I want Thee alone.' This is devotion without cause. Many people go to wealthy people and want many things, but if some one wants nothing and comes to see a rich man only because he loves him the rich man also comes to love him.

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The light of God that attracts a devotee is not a flame. It is bright but cool and it does not burn but gives peace and joy.

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If I am taken to a show I may not be able to see everything. Some sight I may see may send me off into a trance. I was once taken to the Zoological Gardens. I saw a lion, remembered that it is the mount of the goddess Durga and passed into ecstasy. I saw nothing else and came back.

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What is the use of knowing many Sastras? All that is necessary to know is how to cross the river of life. God alone is real and all else is unreal. When Arjuna was about to shoot an arrow at the mark hung above the assembled audience of princes—the mark was the eye of an artificial fish—his teacher Dronacharya asked him, 'Do you see the kings and princes around you?' Arjuna replied, 'No, I cannot see them.'. 'Do you see me?' 'No.'

'Do you see the tree yonder?' 'No.' 'Do you see the fish?' 'No.' 'Then what do you see?' 'I see only the eye of the fish.'

* * *

He who has united all (religions) is a real man. Most people are concerned with only one. But I see that all are one. Sakta, Vaishnava, Vedanta, all faiths relate to the One. He who is Formless is also with Form. He manifests Himself in many ways.

* * *

A man who had attained full *jnan* said, 'When one cannot distinguish between the water of a pool and the water of the Ganges then full wisdom has come to him.'

* * *

Worldly people worship or repeat prayers just for the time being. Those who know nothing but God repeat His name with every breath. Others silently repeat the name of Rama constantly. Those who

follow the path of *jnan* repeat *Soham* (I am He). There are others whose tongues move constantly repeating the name of God. He should be always remembered.

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How wonderful are the tides! Near the sea there are flow and ebb in the river, but higher up the river flows in a single direction. What does it mean? Apply this to the spirit. Those who are very near God have a tidal ebb and flow of feeling and manifestation. Some few realise the highest form of love (*Prema*).

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Worldly people think there is nothing like wealth. A certain wealthy man said he would leave all his property at the lotus feet of God. Does God want wealth? He wants *Jnan*, *Bhakti*, discrimination, dislike for the world.

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When a lamp is lighted there is no dearth of moths.
If you realise God He provides everything, no
want remains unfulfilled. When He comes into the
heart many people come to serve the man so
favoured

If you can see your own Self in you then all is
done. All meditation and endeavour are for that
purpose. And the body is intended for that
sadhana (devotion). So long as the golden image
is not cast an earthen mould is needed. When that
is done the mould may be thrown away. After
seeing God the body may be abandoned.

Merely dry *man* is like fireworks that burst after a
little display. Great Rishis like Narada and
Sukdeva had love for God. Love is the rope for
binding God.

God is beyond the reach of worldly knowledge. He cannot be realised if there is the slightest taint of love for the world. He can only be realised by a pure mind and pure intelligence free from all worldly desire. A pure mind, pure intelligence and a pure soul are one and the same thing.

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Why do I love the boys? Because they are still free from attachment to the things of the world. To me they appear completely emancipated.

* * *

I see God has assumed every shape, man, an image, the Salgram stone. I see only One, never two.

* * *

Those who are the instruments of God for teaching men have to renounce the world. The preacher must give up women and gold, otherwise his teaching is not accepted. It is not enough to renounce inwardly. The renunciation must be out-

ward also so that it may be an object-lesson for people.

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If a mirror is unclean the reflection of the face cannot be seen in it. Unless the mind is pure the image of the Self cannot be seen.

* * *

This world is like a prickly plant. If you touch it the hand will bleed. If you bring a plant with thorns and say it is burnt that is not enough. Gather the fire of *jnan* and set fire to the plant, then it will be burnt

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A devotee inspired by love sometimes thinks he is a dancer before the Lord and dances. Sometimes he feels like a female companion and again a handmaiden. Again, there is the feeling of a mother towards the child as Yasoda felt towards Sri Krishna. Finally, there is the sweetness of love like that of the Gopis for Sri Krishna.

In the evening leave all other work and call upon God. In the dark one remembers God. One thinks everything could be seen a little while ago; who has made it suddenly dark? Mussalmans put aside all other work and say their prayers at regular hours.

* * *

When Yudhisthira wanted to offer all his sins to Sri Krishna Bhima warned him and said, 'Do not think of doing so. What you give you will get back a thousandfold.'

* * *

Where people discuss other people and talk ill of them the feeling about God finds no scope.

* * *

Go continually forward but halt where there is Peace.

* * *

So long as one reasons with the mind God cannot be attained. As long as reasoning is used one

cannot get away from the world, the function of the senses persists. When this stops then comes consciousness of God. The Soul cannot be known with this mind. By the Soul alone the Soul can be known.

* * *

It is not enough to realise that God exists. Nor is everything ended if one sees God. He has to be brought into the home, one has to get acquainted with Him. Some people may have seen a king, but it is only a few who can bring him to their house and entertain him to dinner

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I wanted to be a king of devotees, not a dried up Sadhu.

* * *

I used to go to the roof of the house and call for devotees. Behold, they are coming in to me.

* * *

It would be better to call Buddhadeva an avatar of Compassion. Why is he called an avatar of Vishnu?

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To ask for a son, to heal disease are miracles. It is only inferior people who call upon God to cure them when they are ill

* * *

It is useless to try to lay by. The bee makes a honeycomb with infinite pains, but some one comes and breaks it and takes it away.

* * *

This is wonderful. I am ignorant but educated people come to me. It is the will of God.

* * *

I am telling you—this is not to be mentioned to other people—that the desire comes to me to become Prakriti (the Female principle of creation) and to embrace and kiss God.

* * *

When God assumes the human form other devotees come with Him. Some are close to Him, others are distant, others are suppliers of food.

* * *

The joy of singing hymns, the joy of realising God, this joy is wine, the wine of Prema (Love)! The object of life is to love God. Devotion is the essence of everything. It is difficult to know God by *jnan* and argument.

* * *

Every path leads to God. All religions are true. You want to go to the roof of the house. This can be done by the staircase, wooden stairs, or a bamboo ladder, or even by clambering over a rope. It can even be done with the help of a single bamboo

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There is one means of removing caste. It is Bhakti. There is no caste among Bhaktas. Devotion makes the body, mind, soul all pure.

Chaitanya and Nitai repeated the name of Hari and embraced even the lowest classes of people. Without Bhakti a Brahman is not a Brahman, with Bhakti a Chandala is not a Chandala. Untouchable classes become pure, holy by devotion.

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What shall I do with miraculous powers! Can God be realised by them? If not, then everything is false.

* * *

To bring in the image of God the temple of the heart must be first cleaned, then preparation for worship may be made.

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There is a story about Guru Nanak that when he attempted to eat some food given to him by an evil man he found it covered with blood. Pure food alone should be offered to Sadhus. Anything

offered to them should not be bought by unclean,
ill-earned money.

* * *

By repeating the praise of God all sin disappears from the body. The body is a tree on which sin sits like a bird. To repeat the name of God is like clapping hands. As birds fly away from a tree when you clap your hands, so sin is disturbed and leaves the body on hearing the name of God.

* * *

Everything is the *Leela* (manifestation) of God. If there were no darkness we could not understand the grandeur of light. Happiness could not be appreciated if there were no unhappiness. When evil is known good is understood.

* * *

In music one man merely accompanies on a single note while another plays a variety of tunes. I want to be the second player. Why should I

repeat *Soham*, *Soham*, or *Brahma*, *Brahma* on a single note? I want to play on all the notes. I shall call on God on the notes of peace, the child's love for the mother, friendship, love; I shall rejoice, I shall revel in Him.

* * *

Get in somehow into the pool of nectar. Whether you do it by prayer, or some one pushes you in, the result is the same. Both ways you become immortal.

* * *

When man beholds God he becomes beside himself with joy and silent. Who is to impart the intelligence? Who is to explain?

* * *

If the eyes are dry, the mouth is dry, there is no profit. Without *Bhakti* and *Prema* nothing can be gained.

* * *

He who is Brahman is also the primal Sakti. There was a king who said to a Yogi that he wanted *jnan* in a single word. The Yogi said, 'Very well, you will have *jnan* (Knowledge) in a single word.' A little later a juggler suddenly appeared before the Raja and waved two fingers before him crying, 'Raja, see this, see this!' In another minute the two fingers became one and the juggler cried, 'See this, Raja, see this!' This means that at first Brahman and primal Sakti appear two, but when knowledge of the Brahman is obtained the two disappear. They become identified, One. The One which has no Two.

Advaitam!

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As long as there is a consciousness of the body so long there are happiness and grief, life and death, disease and mourning. All these are of the body, not of the soul. After the death of the body perhaps God takes us to a better place just as a

child is born after the travail of labour. When knowledge of the Self is acquired joy and sorrow, life and death appear like a dream.

* * *

A Sadhu was feeling very thirsty when he saw a *Bhisti* (water-carrier) passing with his waterskin. The man offered the Sadhu a drink. The Sadhu asked whether the waterskin was clean. The *Bhisti* replied, 'Maharaj, my waterskin is clean but yours (stomach) is not because it contains refuse of many kinds. You may drink out of my waterskin without any hesitation.'

* * *

While the ego remains knowledge [of Brahman cannot be had. When this knowledge is acquired, God is seen then the ego comes under control. Otherwise, it is difficult. It is difficult to catch one's own shadow. But when the sun reaches the meridian then the shadow is only a span distant from the body.

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When a kite has a fish in its talon it is pestered by a host of crows. When it drops the fish it is let alone and settles peacefully on a tree. When one abandons the world there is peace.

* * *

You are devotees, why should I not tell you these experiences? Now-a-days I cannot visualise the subtle conscious form of God. I am now directed to see the form of God in the human shape. My nature is to see God, to touch Him and to embrace Him. Now a voice in me says, 'You have assumed a human form, rejoice with men in whom He appears. God is in all life but He is more manifest in man. Man is not to be considered lightly. He can think of God, he can think of the Infinite, other creatures cannot do so.'

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A fisherwoman on her way back from selling fish was spending the night with a flower-woman. Her fish basket was put away somewhere and she was

asked to sleep in a room in which there were flowers. The fisher-woman could not get sleep and the flower-woman asked her why she was restless. The fisherwoman thought it was because of the flowers and wanted her fish basket. When she got it she sprinkled it with water, kept it near her head and went off to sleep at once. People of the world feel uncomfortable when surrounded by pure influences; in their own element they are happy.

* * *

There are five kinds of light; the light of the lamp, the light of the fire, the light of the moon, the light of the sun, and the light of the sun and moon together. *Bhakti* is the moon; *jnan* is the sun.

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In the case of avatars the lights of *Bhakti*-moon and *Jnan*-sun appear simultaneously.

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To know God or an avatar devotion is necessary. For big fish in large ponds bait has to be cast into

the water; milk has to be churned for the butter in it; to get oil from mustard it has to be crushed. Henna leaves dye the nails and hands, but they have to be crushed and made into a paste first.

* * *

Sometimes God is the magnet and the devotees the needle; sometimes this is reversed and the devotee becomes the magnet, for He loves the devotee and is attracted towards him.

* * *

When Sri Krishna vanished from the Ras dance the Gopis became frantic. Seeing a tree they said, 'Perhaps you are an anchorite, you must have seen Sri Krishna. Otherwise, why are you still and plunged in *samadhi*?' Looking at the grass-grown earth they said, 'You, Earth, have surely seen Him, else why is your hair standing on end? He must have certainly touched you.' Again, seeing the Madhavi creeper they said, 'O Madhavi, give us

Madhava.' The Gopis were mad with Prema (love):

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The religion of the Rishis, Sanatan Dharma, has existed from time immemorial and will continue to exist for infinite time. In this religion there is the worship of Formless God and also God with Form. There are also the paths of Bhakti and Jnan. Other religions, modern religions, will exist for some time and will then disappear.

* * *

I sometimes say to Mother Kali, Mother, repair a little the sheath of the sword (the sheath is the body and the sword is the soul), but this kind of prayer is becoming less frequent. At present I cannot find the "I" in me even by searching for it. I see She (the Mother Kali) Herself is in this sheath.

* * *

Narendra (afterwards Swami Vivekananda) belongs to a high order. It is the House of the Nirakara (Formless God). He has the qualities of a man. Of all the devotees who come here there is not one like him.

Sometimes I take account of him. Others may be lotuses with a small number of petals, Narendra is a lotus with a thousand petals.

Others may be small jars and other vessels, he is the biggest kind of jar.

Among ponds he is a very large tank.

Among fish he is a large red-eyed salmon, others are small fry and smaller fish.

He is a big receptacle, can hold many things. He is a bamboo with a big hollow.

He is subject to nothing, neither to attachment nor to the senses.

(This was said in 1885, a year before Ramkrishna's death and long before the world had heard of Swami Vivekananda).

* * *

Faith is path. All religions are true. You can go to Kalighat (the famous place of pilgrimage in Calcutta) by many roads. God can be reached by different religions. Many rivers flow by many ways but they all fall into the sea. There all are one.

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There was a Sadhu living for some time in the temple at Dakshineswar. He was plunged in meditation and never spoke to any one. One day the sky became cloudy and dark, after a little while a strong breeze came up and the sky became clear again. Seeing this the Sadhu came out of his room and began laughing and dancing. Ramkrishna asked him, 'You stay quietly in your room, why are you laughing and dancing today?' The Sadhu

said, 'This is like the maya of the world. First, a clear sky, then clouds, then a clear sky again.'

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Worldly people do not listen to the name of God nor do they allow others to do so. They speak ill of religious people and make fun of a man given to meditation and thoughts of God.

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As brass and gold can be distinguished immediately a mark is made on a touchstone so God can immediately find out whether a man is sincere or a hypocrite.

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In a game of hide-and-seek the boy who touches the post cannot again become a "thief," so if one touches the lotus feet of God he can no longer be entangled in the world.

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A young tender bamboo can be easily bent but it is impossible to bend a full grown or old bamboo.

In the same way, the minds of young boys can be easily inclined towards God but grown up or old people are inflexible and get out of hand.

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The mind of a man is like a bag of mustard seeds. If the seeds are once scattered it is very difficult to collect them. In like manner, it is very hard to concentrate the mind of a man scattered in the affairs of the world. A boy's mind is not distracted and can easily be stilled. But the minds of older people are entirely occupied with matters of the world and it is very difficult for them to concentrate their thoughts upon God.

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A mind with desire is like a wet match and another mind free from desire is like a dry match. The first is rubbed in vain while the latter ignites (realises God) quickly.

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A stone can remain immersed in water for any length of time without any change whereas a clod

of earth melts in no time. This is the difference between the man of faith and the man without faith. Things can be moulded from soft clay but nothing can be done with burnt clay. The man whose heart has been burnt with worldly thoughts can have no spiritual thoughts.

* * *

God cannot be realised so long as there is the slightest trace of desire. A thread with a thin fibre sticking out cannot be passed through the eye of a needle. When all desire disappears and the mind becomes pure then alone is God realised.

* * *

Let no one meditate on God with the desire of obtaining wealth, a son, or honour and respect. He who prays to God for Himself alone knows Him.

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As a clear reflection cannot be seen in water which is disturbed so God is not mirrored in a mind which

is not still. Therefore, Yogis first control the breath and then meditate on God.

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It is very difficult to get rid of pride. If onion or garlic is crushed and put into a cup the smell persists even if the cup is repeatedly washed. Similarly a trace of pride always lingers.

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A tired traveller was resting under a tree without knowing that it was a wishing tree. The thought came to him that if he could find a comfortable bed he could have a good sleep. Immediately the bed appeared. The traveller was astonished and lay on it and thought that if a young woman came and shampooed his feet it would bring him rest and sleep. The wish was at once fulfilled. The traveller was delighted but he began feeling hungry and wished for food and a variety of excellent dishes at once appeared before him. After satisfying his hunger he began cogitating about the strange
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happenings of the day and wondered what would happen if a tiger appeared at that moment. A tiger appeared the next moment and devoured him. This is what happens in this world. If a man desires worldly things he gets them but along with them come disease, sorrow, humiliation and perhaps loss of wealth, tigers more terrible than those that infest forests.

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One must have patience like a blacksmith's anvil.
It is hammered on incessantly but that makes no difference to it.

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As bait attracts fish so God is attracted by the strong faith of a devotee.

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The sight of a lawyer reminds a man of litigation and a court of law and a physician reminds us of disease and medicines. In the same way, the sight of a holy man reminds us of God.

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In whatever direction the course of a ship may be the compass always points to the north, and the ship does not miss its course. If a man keeps his mind towards God then he need not have any fear.

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An almanac may give an account of rainfall but squeezing the almanac does not yield a drop of water. A great deal about religion may be written in books but religion does not come by reading books alone.

*** * ***

If a flint remains in water for any length of time it emits a spark of fire as soon as it is struck by steel. A man of real faith may spend a long time in the company of evil men but as soon as he hears the name of God he becomes intoxicated by his love for God.

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As a ripe mango drops off of itself from the stem so on the attainment of wisdom self-conceit and other weaknesses disappear of themselves.

*** * ***

Gas light comes from one place but it illuminates many places in a city. Religious men of many countries come from one God.

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Let any man think as he will, call on the deity by any name and in any form, if he meditates and prays he attains to God.

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Those who are narrow-minded calumniate other religions and declare their own religion as the best and make sects and parties. But those who are devoted to God seek no sects and parties. Moss gathers in ponds and pools but never in a river.

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Sin and mercury cannot be concealed. If a man takes any preparation of mercury it appears as ulcers on his skin and the effects of sin always become obvious.

As many people share the warmth round a fire so people derive instruction from holy men who know God.

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So long as there are contempt, shame and fear God cannot be realised.

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Late at night a man wanted to have a smoke, but the fire in the house had gone out. He went to a neighbour, aroused him and asked for fire. The neighbour looked at him in surprise and said, 'You are carrying a lighted lantern in your hand. Isn't there fire in it?'

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Why should all people renounce the world? At the same time, is it the desire of God that all should be engrossed in the allure of the world? How do you know what is His will and what is not His will? You say it is His will that men should live in the world and engage themselves in the affairs

of the world. When a wife or son dies why do you not see the will of God in it? When you cannot get enough to eat, when you are very poor, why do you not see the will of God in it? Maya does not permit His will to be known. By Maya the impermanent seems permanent and the permanent seems impermanent. It is Maya that makes us believe that we are the masters, son and wife and other relations are our own.

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The work of the world is very difficult. If one whirls round he becomes giddy and falls down senseless. But if he holds on to a post and spins round it he is safe. Do your work but do not forget God.

* * *

An elderly man placed a towel on his shoulder and was going to bathe in the river. His wife was twitting him with his inability to renounce the

ld. She said, 'You are no good, you cannot live a day without me. So-and-so is different.'

'What has he done?'

'He has got sixteen wives, but he is leaving them one by one.'

The husband said, 'That is not the way of renunciation at all. Everything must be renounced at once. I can do it.'

And he left the house and never came back.

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All round me are worldly people, round about me are lusts of the flesh and of gold, still I am in this state, constantly in *samadhi*, in high emotion.

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While Paramhansa Ramkrishna was suffering from cancer of the throat he was for some time under treatment of Dr. Mahendralal Sircar, an eminent homoeopathic physician possessed of an intellect of a high order. Dr. Sircar became a

great admirer of Ramkrishna and used to spend several hours with him whenever he went to see him. One day Dr. Sircar said that he was pained to see people touching the feet of the Paramhansa and was proceeding to give him some advice when Ramkrishna interrupted him saying, 'What can you say to which I should listen? You are greedy, you are lustful, you are proud' Another doctor who was present explained to Dr. Sircar that what the Paramhansa had said was not a particular reflection upon him but applied to all men of the world.

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As you see this fan so have I seen God, clear and distinct. And I saw that He and the One that dwells in my heart are the same.

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A certain person asked Sri Ramkrishna, 'Kindly net me in one word so that I may be illuded.' Ramkrishna said, 'The Absolute is the one

reality, the universe is unreal.' And he became silent.

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If all minds are gathered into me then all is done. What am I? He. I am the instrument, He is the Player. In me is the being of God, therefore so many people are attracted.

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Sri Ramkrishna put to Totapuri, the Vedantist, the question, "Where is the necessity of daily meditation in your present advanced state?" Totapuri replied that a brass vessel would lose its lustre unless scrubbed every day; the mind could not be kept pure without daily meditation. Sri Ramkrishna rejoined that if the vessel was made of gold it would not be tarnished. In other words, devotional exercises are no longer necessary for one who has come to know God.

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Man is like a pillow-case. The colour of one pillow-case may be red, that of another black, and so on, but all contain the same cotton. So it is with men—one is handsome, another is ugly, a third pious, a fourth wicked, but the Divine One dwells in them all.

* * *

The anger of the good is like a line which is drawn on the surface of the water and which soon disappears.

* * *

There is no harm if a boat is in the water, but the water must not be allowed to get into the boat, because then the boat will sink. Similarly there is no harm if a devotee lives in the world as a householder, but he must not allow worldliness to enter into his mind

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He alone enters the kingdom of Heaven who is not a thief of his own thoughts, in other words,

guilelessness and simple faith are the roads to that kingdom.

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When the head of a goat is severed from its body, the trunk moves and quivers for some time. The goat dies hard. Even so does a man's egoism.

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A certain young disciple asked Sri Ramkrishna, "Lord, how can one conquer lust?" Sri Ramkrishna smiled and said, "Look upon every woman as your own mother, never look at the face of a woman, but look towards her feet. All evil thoughts will then disappear."

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Long must you struggle in the water before you learn to swim; similarly, many a struggle must you pass through before you can hope to swim on the ocean of Divine Bliss.

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Men weep rivers of tears because a son is not born to them or because they cannot get riches. But who sheds even a drop of tear because he had not been fortunate enough to see the Lord or possess love enough for Him?

* * *

When a man is thirsty does he refuse to drink of the Ganges water because it is turbid, and does he proceed directly to dig a tank to provide himself with drinking water? He who has not thirst for religion, goes about attacking all religions and raising endless discussions about them. One who is thirsty has no time for nice discriminations.

* * *

There is but one God, but endless are His names and endless the aspects in which He may be regarded. Call Him by any name and worship Him in any aspect that pleases you. You are sure to see Him.

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For this Iron Age (Kali Yuga) it is communion with God by love, devotion and self-surrender, as practised by the Rishi Narada, that is most suitable.

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There is always a shadow under the lamp while its light illumines distant objects. So the men in the immediate proximity of a holy prophet do not understand him. Those who live at a distance are charmed by his spirit.

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So long as the body endures the consciousness of the ego does not altogether disappear. When the leaves of the cocoanut palm drop off they leave a mark on the tree. But this slight feeling of the ego cannot fetter him who is free.

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There are two kinds of reasoning—Involution and Evolution. Of the shell of a fruit is the kernel; so of the kernel is the shell.

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Do you know how God exists in all creatures? In the same way as the women of rich people live behind *chiks* (split bamboo lattice). They can see all but no one can see them. God exists in precisely the same manner.

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As one believes so he profits. God is the divine wishing tree. Whatever one seeks he gets it from Him. A poor man's son, after receiving education, becomes a Judge of a High Court. Then he thinks he is all right. God then says, 'Yes, you are all right.' Then when the man retires on pension then he understands, 'What have I done in this life?' God will then say, 'So it is, what have you done?'

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So long as God is sought outside oneself it is ignorance; when He is sought inside oneself it is knowledge. He who realises God inside himself realises that He is also outside. He who had a

form is also formless. To the devotee He appears with a form. As in the ocean there is an immense expanse of water, shoreless and limitless, only in some places there are icebergs due to excessive cold so by the devotee's intensity of devotion God is seen with a form. When the sun rises the ice melts and the water resumes its original appearance; with the rise of the sun of wisdom the form melts like ice and God becomes formless.

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Do you know what the nature of maya is like? It is like the weeds in a pond. Push them aside and the surface of the water becomes clear. Then the weeds float back and again cover the water. In the same way so long as you reason with yourself and keep the company of holy men all seems well. Presently worldly desires return and cover the mind as with a veil.

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The sun gives light to the earth but if a small cloud passes over it, it cannot be seen; when

insignificant maya clouds the all-pervading God of Consciousness and Bliss we cannot see Him.

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A locomotive engine not only moves itself but pulls heavily loaded waggons. Likewise, an avatar takes thousands of men nearer to God.

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There are two kinds of men in the world. Some are like winnowing fans and the rest are like sieves. The winnowing fan rejects the husk and other worthless substance but retains the valuable grain; some men reject the worthless things of the world and accept God. The sieve throws out all the valuable stuff and retains only the refuse. In the same manner, some men reject God and keep worthless things.

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Worldly men are like beetles These insects love to live in cowdung and they like nothing else. If you place them inside a lotus flower they become

uneasy and restless. Worldly men like nothing except talking about worldly affairs. If they hear people talking about God they leave that place and go elsewhere where they can hear idle gossip.

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A Brahmin is the same; when he worships he is a priest, when he is in the kitchen he is a cook.

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When a patient is suffering from delirium and there are a jar of water and all kinds of condiments in the same room he may be tempted at any moment. He must be shifted to another room. The desire for the enjoyment of worldly things is thirst. Condiments make the mouth water at a distance. That is the company of women. You must pray in solicitude.

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The only Gurn is the Lord himself. Lakhs of people are to be met with constantly and every one wants to be a Gurn. Who wants to be a disciple?

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People reason and argue so long as they do not arrive at a conclusion. A pitcher makes a gurgling sound when being filled. When it is full and the water is level with the water in the tank no sound is heard.

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When I see Narendra (afterwards Vivekananda) I forget everything. I have never asked him where he lives, what his father does, how many brothers he has got. We rejoice when we think of God. We need not think of the opulence of His creation.

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There are three kinds of men—those who are in bonds, those who are struggling to be free and the free. They are like fish caught in a net. Some make no effort to escape, others struggle to free themselves, while a few tear the net and thus become free.

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If you have to become infatuated why become infatuated with worldly things? Become infatuated with God.

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When Ramkrishna was returning from an invitation the householder wished to send some food for a relative of Ramkrishna, who forbade him to do so, saying he (Ramkrishna) could not lay by anything, nor carry anything with him.

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The Absolute Soul is like a lodestone. It remains still, but the needle (the human soul) it attracts moves.

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One of the signs of the quality of folly is anger. In anger all discrimination is lost. Hanuman set fire to Lanka in anger without thinking that the hut in which Seeta lived might be burnt.

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People who say God keeps some people happy and others unhappy invest God with their own notions of unequal treatment.

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When by some accident some pots are broken the potter throws away the baked ones but gathering the unbaked ones he mixes them with clay and makes fresh pots. So long as God is not seen man has to go back to the potter, that is, he must be born again and again.

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Some persons were crossing the Ganges in a boat. There was a Pandit who was boasting of his learning and naming the Sastras he had read. Then he asked another passenger whether he had read these books. The man said he had read nothing. Suddenly a storm arose and the boat began sinking. Then the other passenger asked, 'Panditji, do you know how to swim?' The Pandit said he did not. The passenger said, 'I have not read any books

but know how to swim. (For the salvation of the soul knowledge of God is necessary. Learning does not help.)

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Devotion may be acquired in the world. The difficulty is that the mind remains elsewhere. If you have got your mind you can give it to God, but it is pledged to the desires of the world. Therefore, it is necessary to keep the company of holy men. When the mind comes back then it is possible to pray and meditate. Stay always with the Guru, serve the Guru, pass your time with Sadhus. Keep water in an earthen pot and it dries up. Plunge it in the Ganges and it will remain always full of water.

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Why do you publish my name in the newspapers? By writing books or in the newspapers no man can be made great. He whom God makes great is known to all even if he lives in a forest. A flower

blooms in a dense forest but the bee finds it Other flies know nothing. Do not look up at men. They praise one moment and blame the other. I do not want to be honoured. May I remain as the humblest of the humble, the lowest of the low.

* * *

I remained as the Mother Kali's maid and companion for two years. My feeling is that of a child The breast of every woman is to me a mother's breast.

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There was a holy man who had many disciples. One day he taught them that the Lord is in every creature, which should be saluted. Shortly afterwards one of the disciples went to the forest to gather wood for the sacred fire. Suddenly he heard a cry, 'A mad elephant is coming; run away and save yourselves.' Every one ran away but the disciple stood his ground, thinking that the elephant was Narayana (the Lord) and he need not

escape. He just saluted and began praying to the elephant. As the animal rushed towards him the Mahut (driver) of the elephant shouted out to him to run and save himself. Still the disciple did not stir. The elephant lifted him up in his trunk and hurled him aside and rushed away. The young man was severely injured and remained unconscious for a long time. His Guru and the other disciples heard of the mishap and carried him to the hermitage. When he recovered his senses he was asked why he had not attempted to escape. He replied, 'Gurudeva had told me that all living creatures are Narayana and when I saw the elephant-Narayana coming I did not budge.' 'True, my son,' said the Guru, 'the elephant-Narayana was coming but the driver-Narayana gave you a warning and you should have listened to him.'

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There was a field in which a cowherd grazed his cows. In the same field there was a fearful

poisonous snake of which all were afraid. One day a Brahmachari was passing that way when the cowherd ran to him and warned him. The holy man said he was not afraid and he knew a charm. As he proceeded the snake darted towards him with uplifted hood but as soon as he repeated the spell it fell down at his feet like an earth-worm. The Brahmachari said to the snake, 'Why dost thou doest evil to others? I will teach thee a *Mantra* Thou wilt then become devoted to God and cease from doing evil.' He taught the snake the *Mantra* and told the reptile to repeat it and do no evil. 'I shall come again,' he said.

The Brahmachari went away. Seeing that the serpent no longer molested any one the cowherd boys became bold and began teasing him and throwing stones. As the snake did nothing one of the boys lifted it up by the tail and whirling it threw it away. The serpent vomitted blood and became still. The boys thought it was dead and went

away. The serpent dragged itself into a hole from which it never came out during the day. At night it ate such fruits as it could find.

Some time later the Brahmachari happened to pass that way again and not seeing the snake called it when it dragged itself painfully to the feet of the Gurn. The holy man heard what had happened and then rebuked the serpent, saying, 'I told thee not to molest any one, but not that thou should not defend thyself. Thou should have hissed without attacking any one. That would have saved thee.'

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Totapuri told me a story about miraculous powers. A man having such powers was sitting by the sea-side when a severe storm arose. He felt uncomfortable and stilled the storm which died away at once. A ship with all sails spread was passing by at the time. When the storm suddenly ceased the ship sank at once with all hands. Thus this

miracle instead of doing any good sent a number of people to their death and the entire sin rested on the miracle-worker.

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Another man who had such powers killed an elephant with a spell and brought it back to life. A holy man who was standing by asked, 'What have you gained by the exhibition of such powers? Has it helped you to realise God?' Saying this the holy man vanished.

* * *

Look at this boy (Narendra who afterwards became Swami Vivekananda). You see him here quiet like one of the mischievous boys who is absolutely still in the presence of his father. But see them playing in the moonlight then they are different. They are of the class of the eternally perfect ones. They are never entangled in the world. When they become a little older and conscious they proceed straight towards God. They come to teach men. They do

not like the world, they are never attracted by women or gold.

The Veda mentions the Homa bird. It lays its egg in the sky but so high that the egg hatches while falling. Then the young bird continues falling but it opens its eyes and grows feathers while doing so. Instead of falling to the ground and getting crushed it swiftly rises upward and flies to its mother. (This remarkable prediction was made in 1882, very shortly after Paramhansa Ramkrishna had seen the young Narendranath Dutt, who astounded the world as Swami Vivekananda at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893.)

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